

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

Vol. LIX

December, 1916

No. III

The HOLY LAND Through Five Thousand Years



by Frederic
Austin Ogg

THE birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea, in the

twenty-fifth year of the Emperor Augustus, is the great pivotal point in the history of the civilized world. And

Palestine — scene of the Messianic life and death, original seat of the

Christian church, theater of age-long theological controversy and clash of arms, mixing-ground of races and nationalities,

GENERAL VIEW OF MODERN JERUSALEM, WITH THE DAMASCUS GATE IN THE FOREGROUND

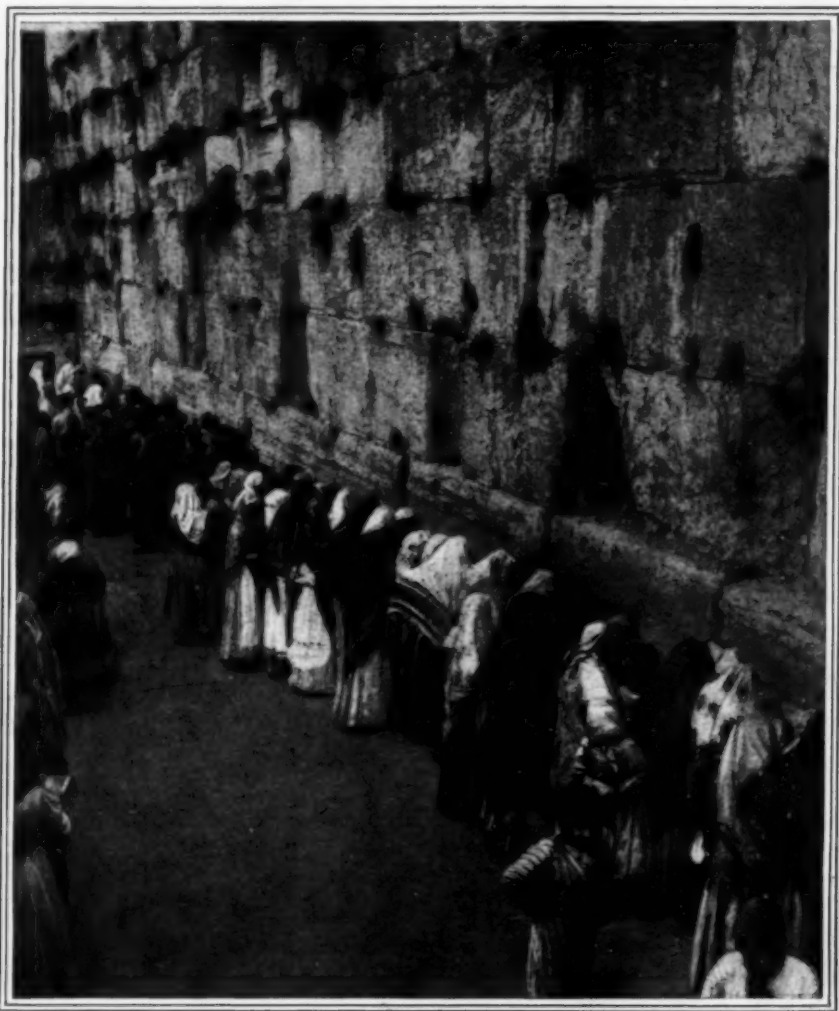
From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York

and goal of countless conquerors, traders, explorers, students, and humble pilgrims—stands unique among the historic lands of the earth.

Palestine is a small country, a narrow

Jersey or Massachusetts, or about one-sixth of that of England.

Physically, it is a land of remarkable contrasts. Its general aspect is one of ruggedness and even barrenness; but

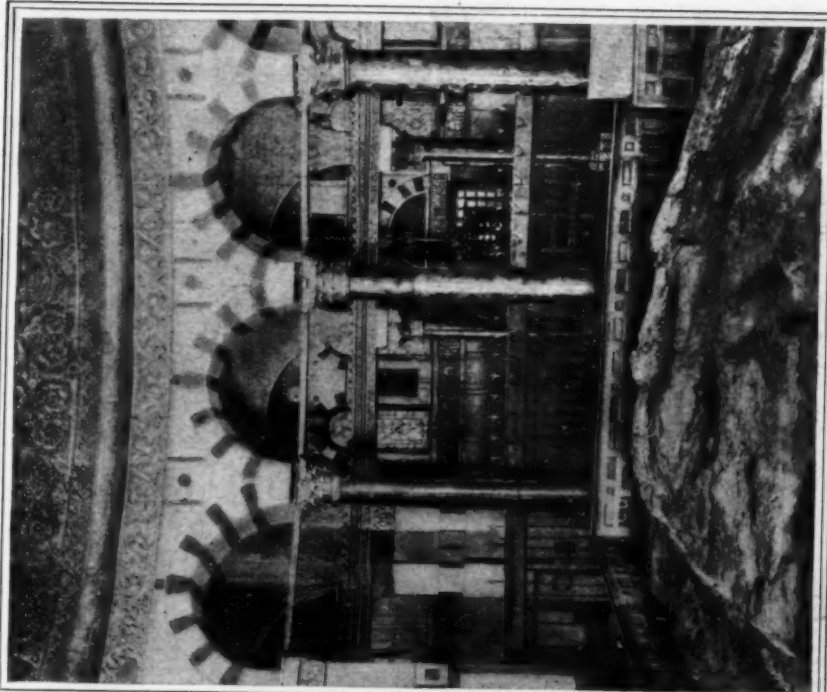


THE WAILING-PLACE OF THE JEWS, A PART OF THE WALL SUPPORTING THE TERRACE ON WHICH THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM STOOD

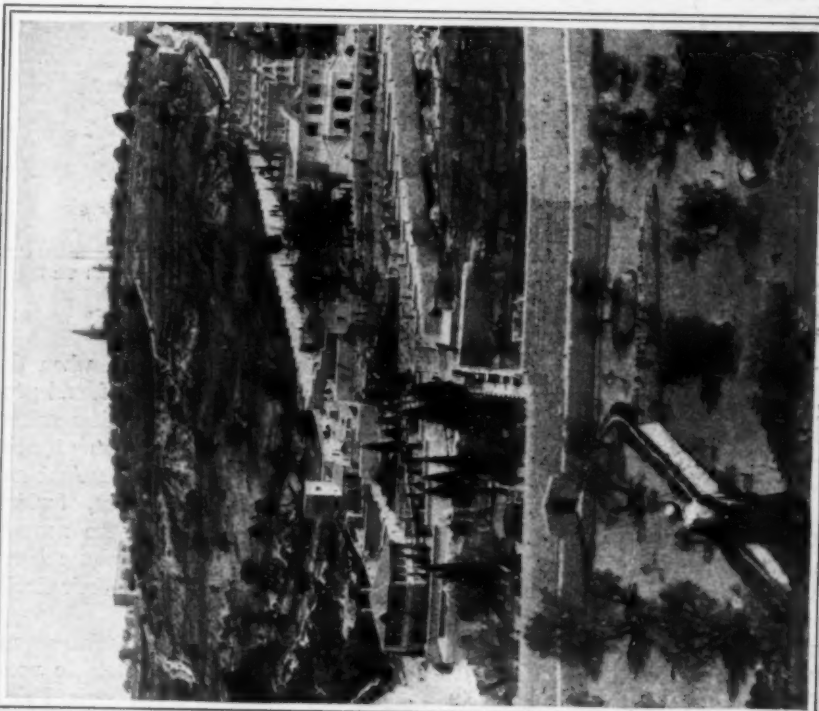
From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York

strip shut in between the Arabian Desert and the Mediterranean Sea on the east and west. From north to south—"from Dan to Beersheba"—it extends for a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, and its area is a little greater than that of New

nature has drawn deep fissures across it from north to south and east to west, causing it to assume the appearance of a gridiron; and each of the little areas thus set off possesses its sharply defined characteristics.



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, SHOWING THE SACRED ROCK ON WHICH, ACCORDING TO TRADITION, STOOD THE ALTAR OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE
From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York



THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, LOOKING ACROSS THE VALE OF KIDRON FROM THE EASTERN WALL OF JERUSALEM
From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York

Thus Judea, the heart of the Hebrew world, is a rocky plateau, not rich nor beautiful, though inspiring. Upper Galilee and Gilead are also lofty and in parts forbidding. Samaria, lower Galilee, Bashan, and other districts, on the contrary, are level, fruitful, and alluring.

empires of Egypt and Babylonia, and its valley routes were traversed by not only the trade but also the armies of the world.

At a very early date, also, the fertile stretches of the country began to attract population. The source from which this population was drawn was the vast Arabian



RUSSIAN PILGRIMS ENTERING THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER, WHICH MARKS THE TRADITIONAL SITE OF THE BURIAL-PLACE OF CHRIST

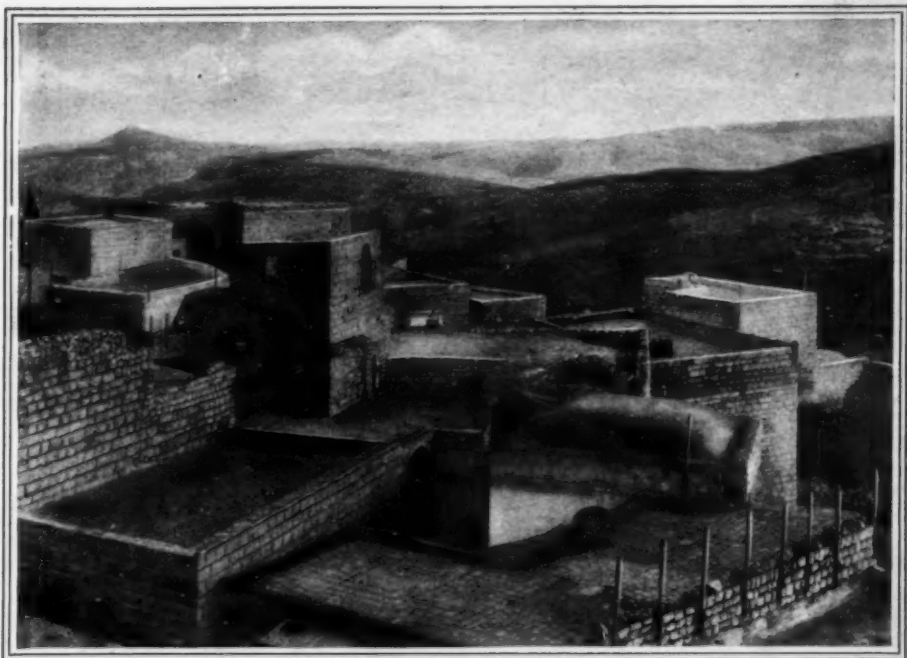
From a photograph by Brown Brothers, New York

As a whole, the country, in contour and climate, bears closer resemblance to southern California than to any other region that can be mentioned. It is indeed a "mere fringe of verdure on the edge of a great desert, a strip of sown land on the borders of the waste."

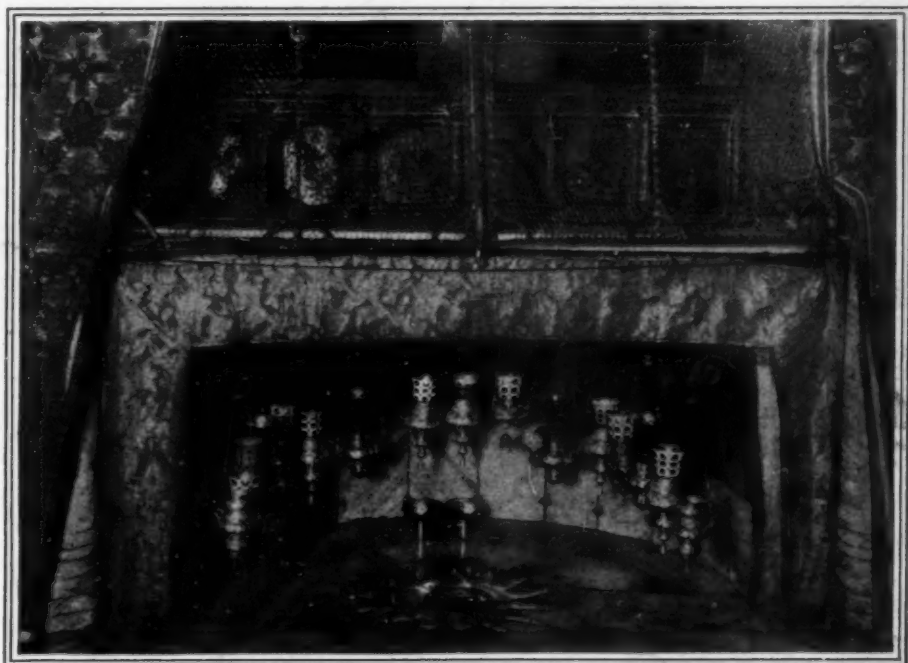
From remotest antiquity Palestine possessed a high degree of importance in international affairs. Long before it became the home of the "chosen people" and the seat of a distinctive civilization, it formed a highway between the two great

desert to the eastward, which, when the curtain of history is lifted, is found peopled by a white race—the Semites, ancestors of the Arabs and Hebrews of more modern times. All of these early Arabians spoke dialects of the same tongue, of which Hebrew was one, and all were nomads moving perpetually up and down the desert country, seeking pasture for their flocks and herds.

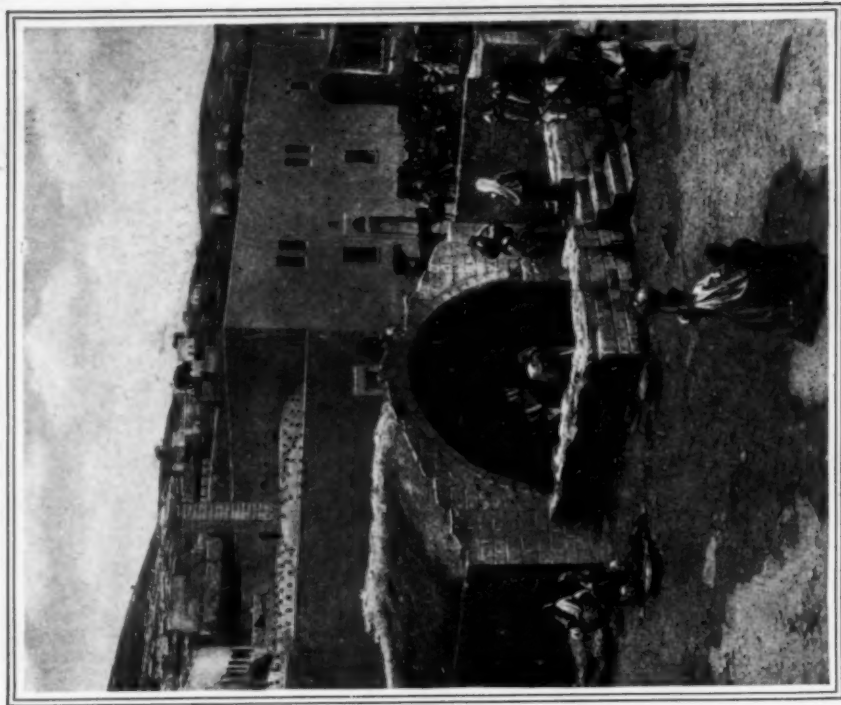
In times of special necessity these wandering folk were prone to press in upon the more favored districts of Syria, Pales-



BETHLEHEM AND THE HILLS OF JUDEA—BETHLEHEM, THE BIRTHPLACE OF CHRIST, IS ONE OF THE GREAT PILGRIMAGE CENTERS OF PALESTINE

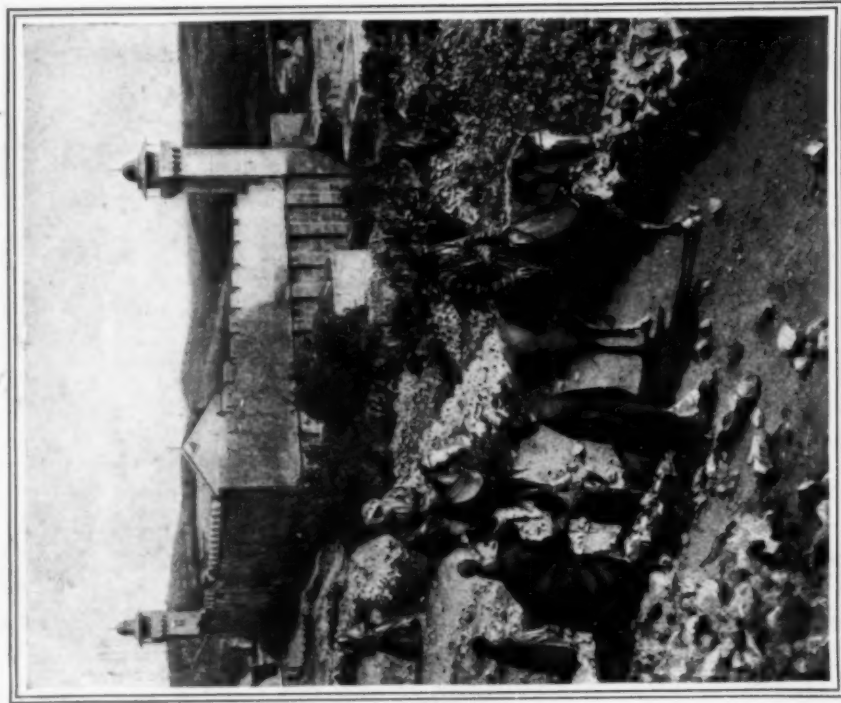


SHRINE IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY, BETHLEHEM—THE STAR MARKS THE SPOT WHERE, ACCORDING TO TRADITION, CHRIST WAS BORN



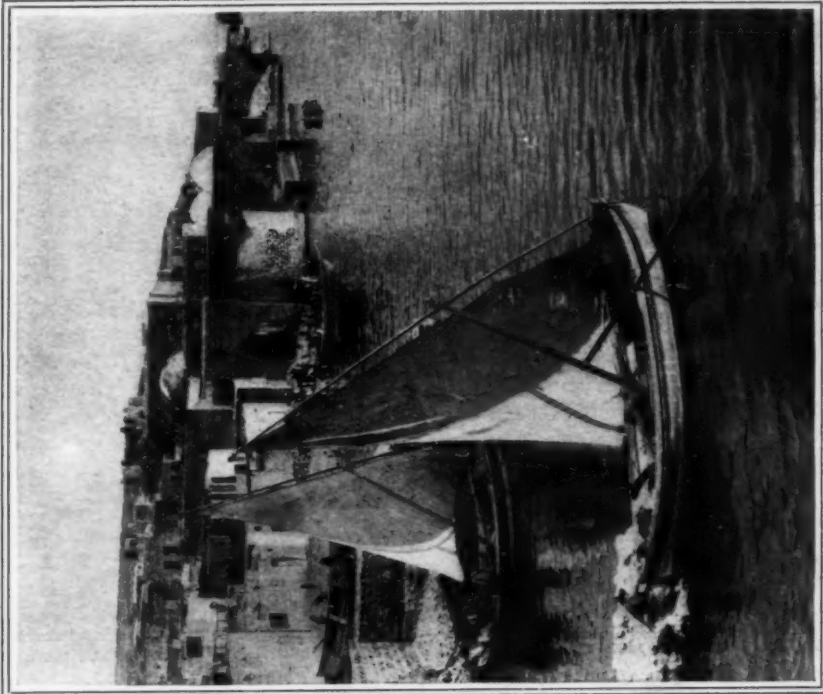
THE FOUNTAIN OF THE VIRGIN, AT NAZARETH, IN GALILEE, THE SCENE OF
THE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS

From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York



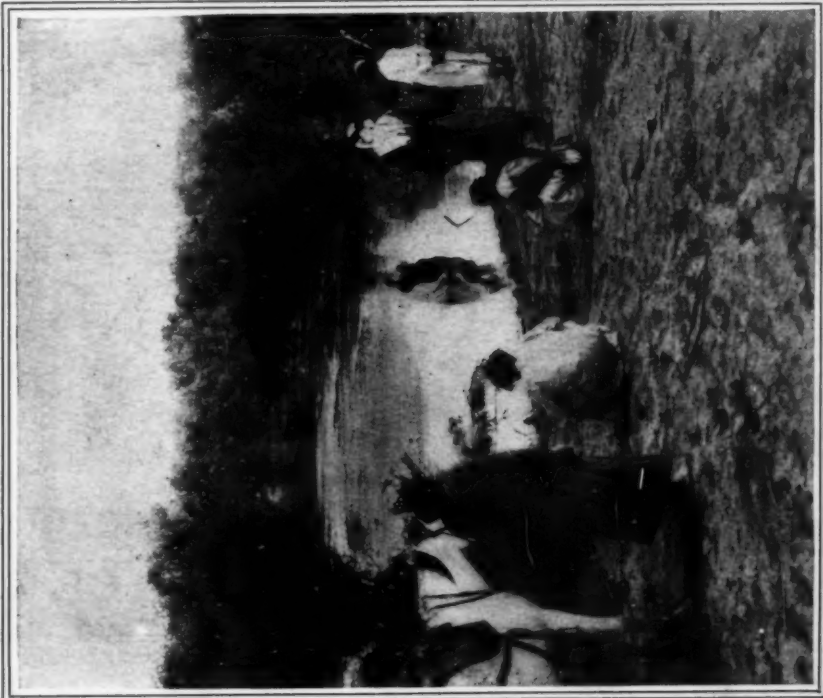
THE MOSQUE MACHPELAH, AT HEBRON, IN JUDEA, MARKING THE BURIAL-
PLACE OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York



THE SEA OF GALILEE, OR LAKE OF TIBERIAS, WHOSE SHORES WERE THE
SCENE OF MOST OF THE EVENTS OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York

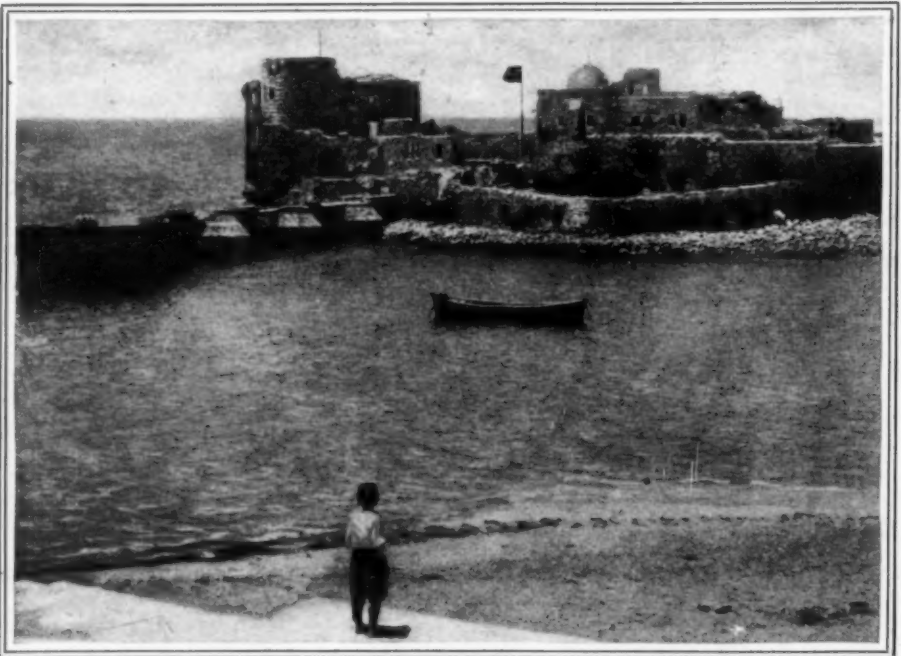


BAPTIZING A CONVERT IN THE JORDAN, THE HISTORIC RIVER WHOSE DEEP
VALLEY TRAVERSES THE HOLY LAND FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York



THE RUINS OF TYRE, A LITERAL FULFILMENT OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECY, "THOU SHALT BE A PLACE TO SPREAD NETS UPON"



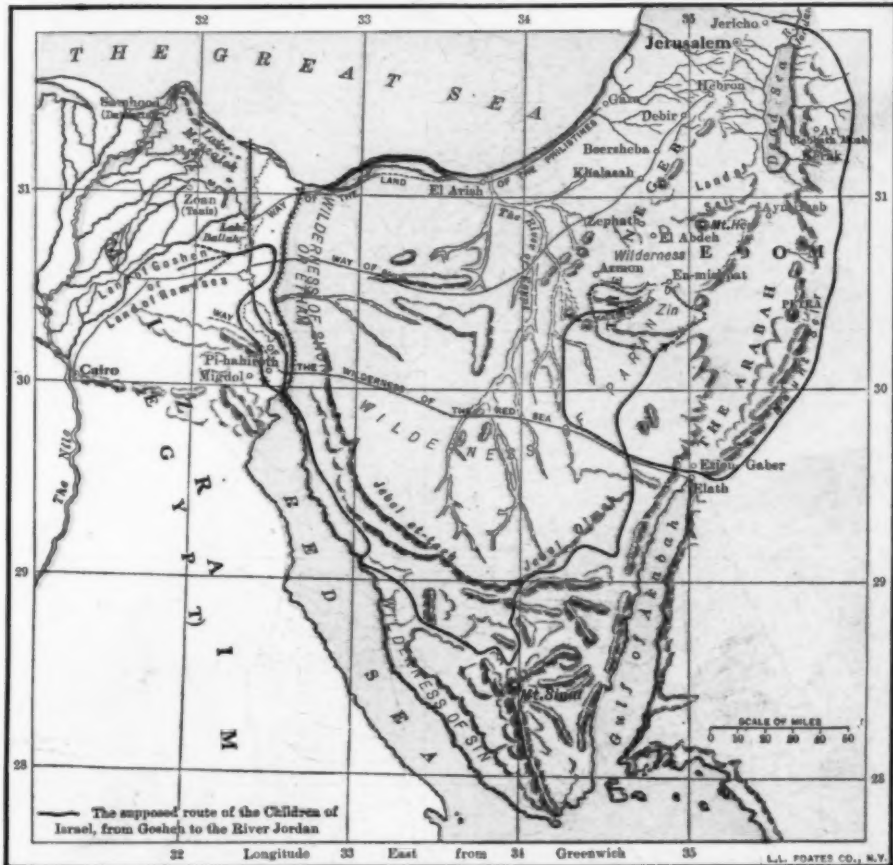
THE CITADEL OF SIDON (NOW SAIDA), THE ANCIENT PHENICIAN SEAPORT THAT WAS FOR MANY CENTURIES A RIVAL OF TYRE

From copyrighted photographs by Underwood & Underwood, New York

tine, and other surrounding lands, and even to adopt there a settled mode of life; and it was in this fashion that Palestine acquired its earliest historic population.

As early as 3000 B.C. the Semitic occupation of the country adjacent to the eastern Mediterranean coast was begun,

At a period whose chronology is difficult to fix the Canaanites were followed into Palestine by the Hebrews. In the book of Genesis is recounted how Terah went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, in lower Mesopotamia, to Haran; how Terah's son Abram, or Abraham, was divine-

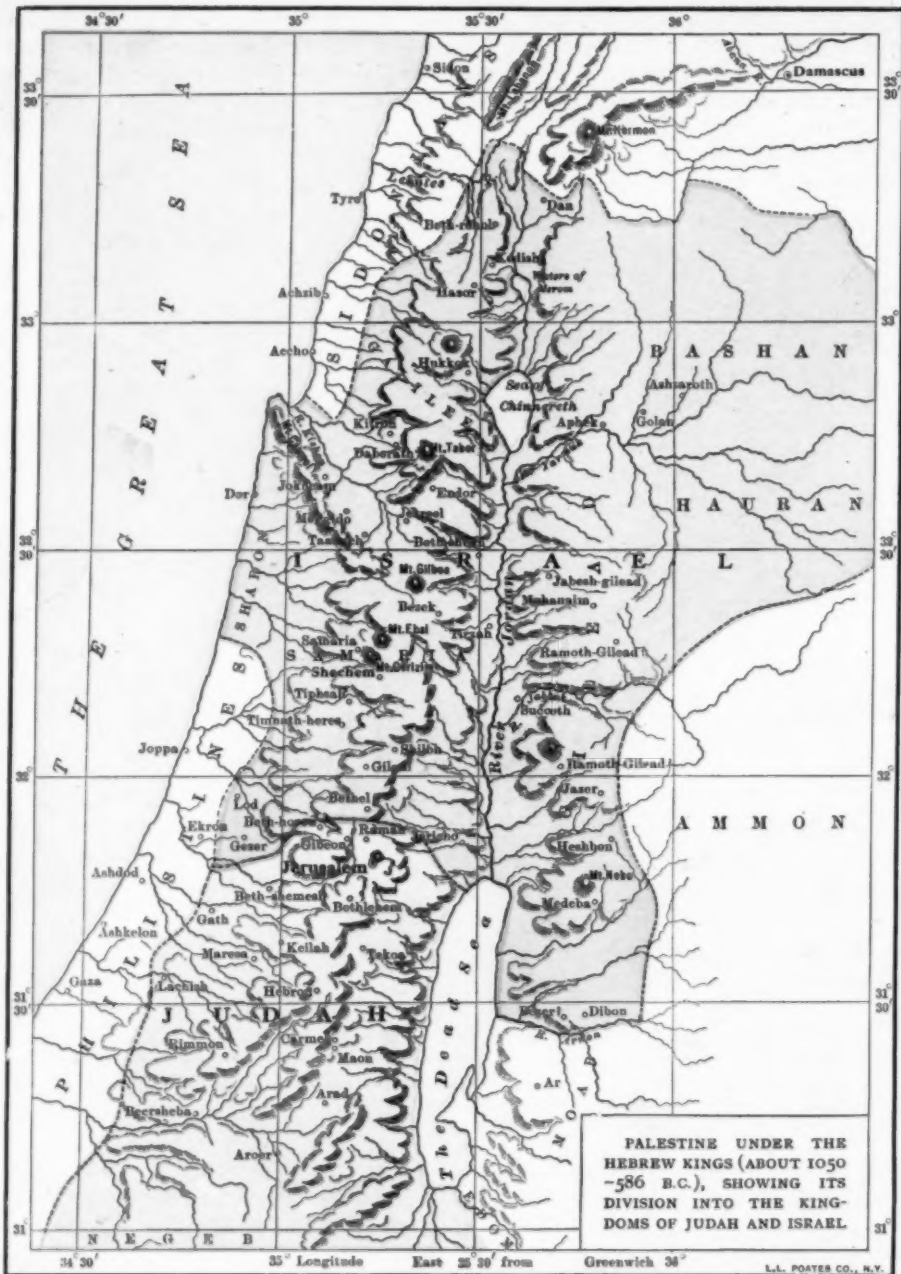


MAP OF SOUTHERN PALESTINE, THE SINAITIC PENINSULA, AND NORTHEASTERN EGYPT, ILLUSTRATING THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE OF THE EXODUS (THIRTEENTH CENTURY B.C.)

Palestine being settled by a tribe known as Canaanites, and the shores of northern Syria by a kindred people, the Phœnicians, who, taking to the sea, became the cleverest navigators of antiquity. In the course of a thousand years these settled communities built walled towns and developed a civilization of considerable pretension, derived principally from Egypt and Babylonia.

ly instructed to go forward to a land that in due time should be revealed, and was promised that he should become the founder of a great nation; and how in due time the patriarch came into the land of Canaan and obtained for himself and his tribe a foothold in it.

Whatever the proportions of literal truth and symbolism in the scriptural account, the fact is clear that nomadic Hebrew

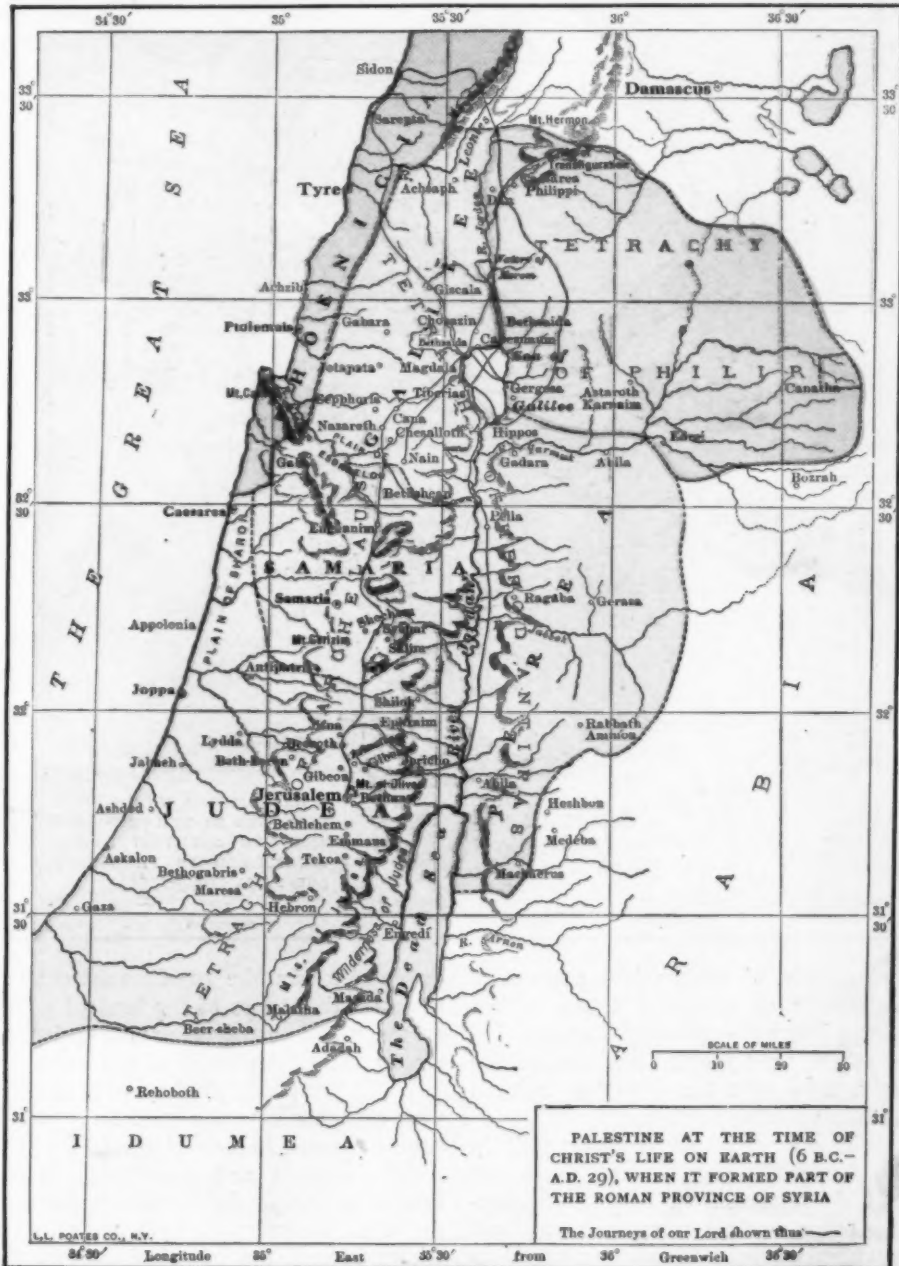


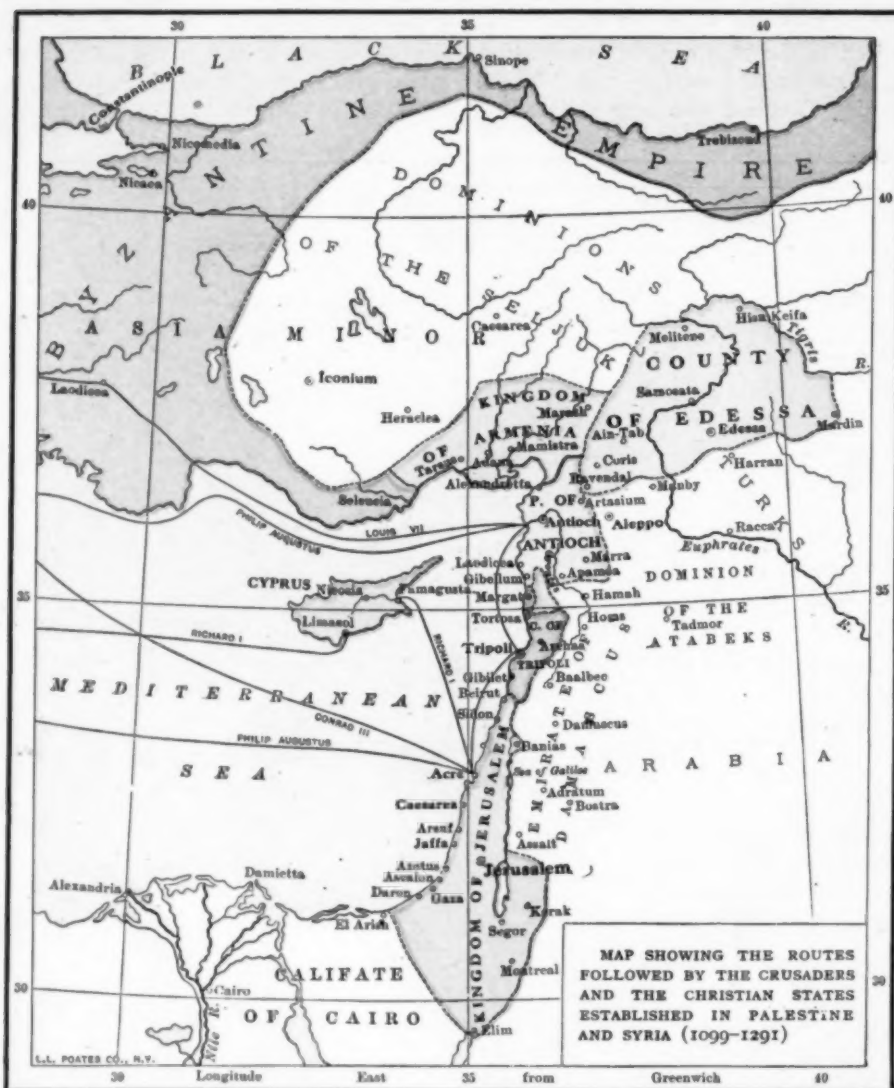
tribes gradually occupied portions of the country, and developed into settled and distinct, although diminutive, nations. Some pushed well to the south, and it

would appear that it was this movement that culminated in the descent of Jacob, or Israel, "with all his seed, threescore and six souls," into Egypt.

How long the "sons of Israel" remained in the Nile country is unknown. At all events, they were welcomed by the reigning Pharaoh, and were assigned to

a desirable dwelling-place in the land of Goshen, where they retained their language, their pastoral mode of life, and their ancestral institutions, and grew from a



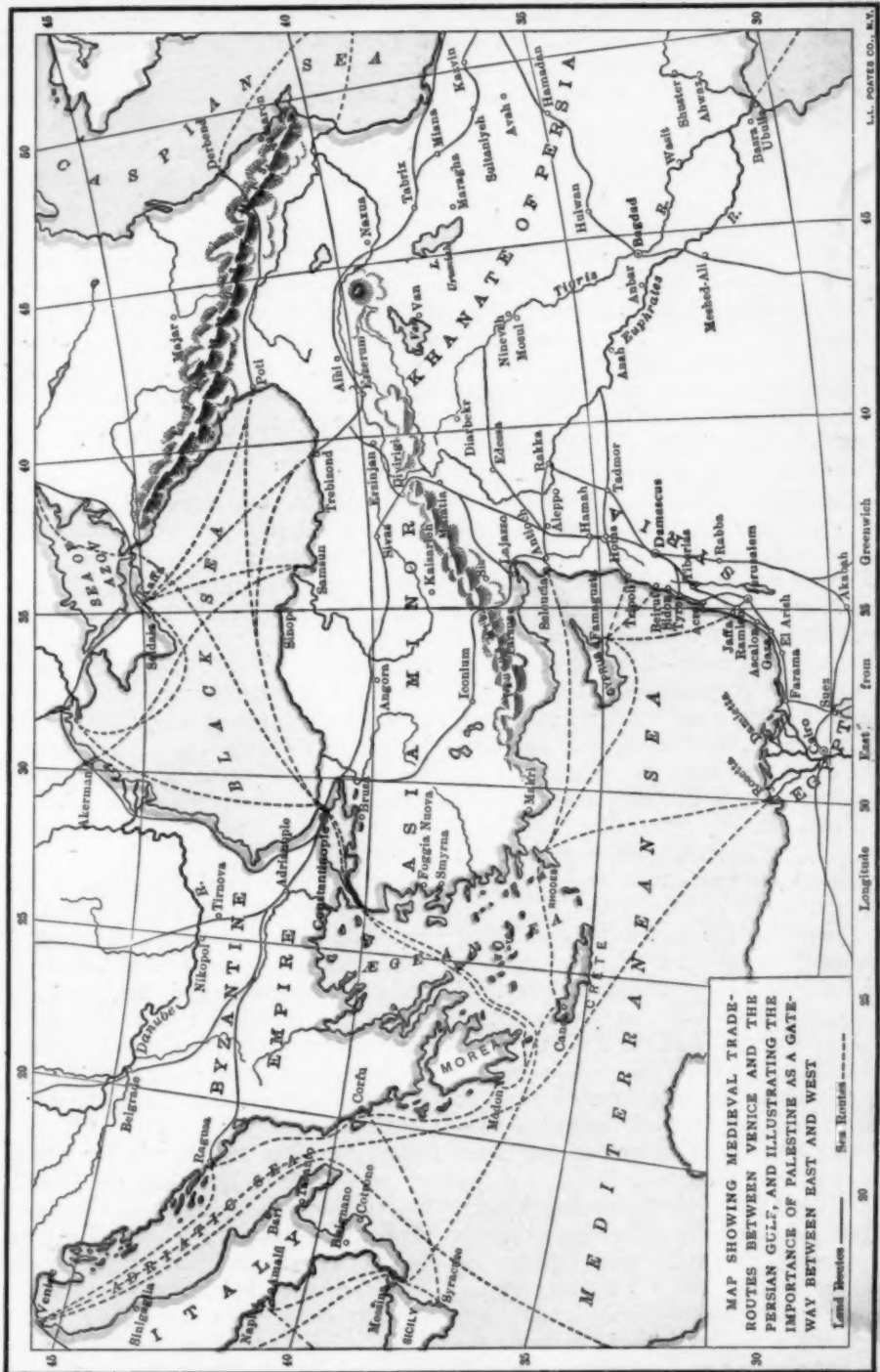


mere family of settlers into a powerful community of organized tribes. Then arose a Pharaoh—probably Rameses II—who “knew not Joseph,” and who, setting taskmasters over the Israelites, reduced them to veritable slavery.

With the “exodus,” probably early in the thirteenth century B.C., came not only deliverance from Egyptian oppression but a new consciousness of national unity and purpose. Under the astute lead-

ership of Moses, the Israelites set out to repossess themselves of the land of their ancestors and to play their intended rôle among the great peoples of the earth.

While the obstacles they encountered were almost insuperable, and forty years were consumed in wanderings in the Sinaitic peninsula and the wilderness of Paran, it was finally found possible to arrive at the promised land by a great détour around the inhabited regions of



Edom, and to come in from the east, across Moab. The Amalekites who dwelt in the cities of Negeb resolutely blocked the natural approach from the south.

THE CONQUEST OF WESTERN PALESTINE

The story of the conquest of western Palestine by the Israelites, beginning with the crossing of the Jordan and the taking of Jericho, is vividly recounted in the first half of the book of Joshua. When the invasion took place, the population of the country was mixed. There were Amorites and Hittites and Perizzites and Hivites and Jebusites, as well as simple Canaanites. There was some pretense to civilization, and the Babylonian system of cuneiform writing had been introduced.

The Hebrew conquest, although marked by many notable exploits, was for a time but partial. Unable to destroy the Canaanitish population or to overthrow its walled towns, the invaders settled on the land around the unsubdued centers and gradually intermingled with the natives until the two peoples, Hebrew and Canaanite, had become one. All were Semites, and the amalgamation was not unnatural or difficult. Its effect was to impart to the Hebrews many new touches of civilization, although at the same time to induce a moral retrogression which evoked the righteous indignation of their religious leaders.

Eventually the region under Hebrew control was extended to the mountains of Lebanon on the north, the desert of Paran on the south, the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and the Arabian desert on the east. But the portion mainly occupied was that lying immediately west of the great longitudinal depression comprising the Jordan valley and the Ghor, or bed of the Dead Sea.

In comparison with surrounding territories, the new home of the Hebrew people was indeed, as it is to-day, a land flowing with milk and honey. Its proportions, however, were severely limited, and it was a question whether it could be made the seat of a strong and enduring nation. If

its intermediate position between Egypt on one side and Assyria and Babylonia on the other was advantageous in the matter of trade and intellectual intercourse, this position also involved constant exposure to attack and possible annihilation.

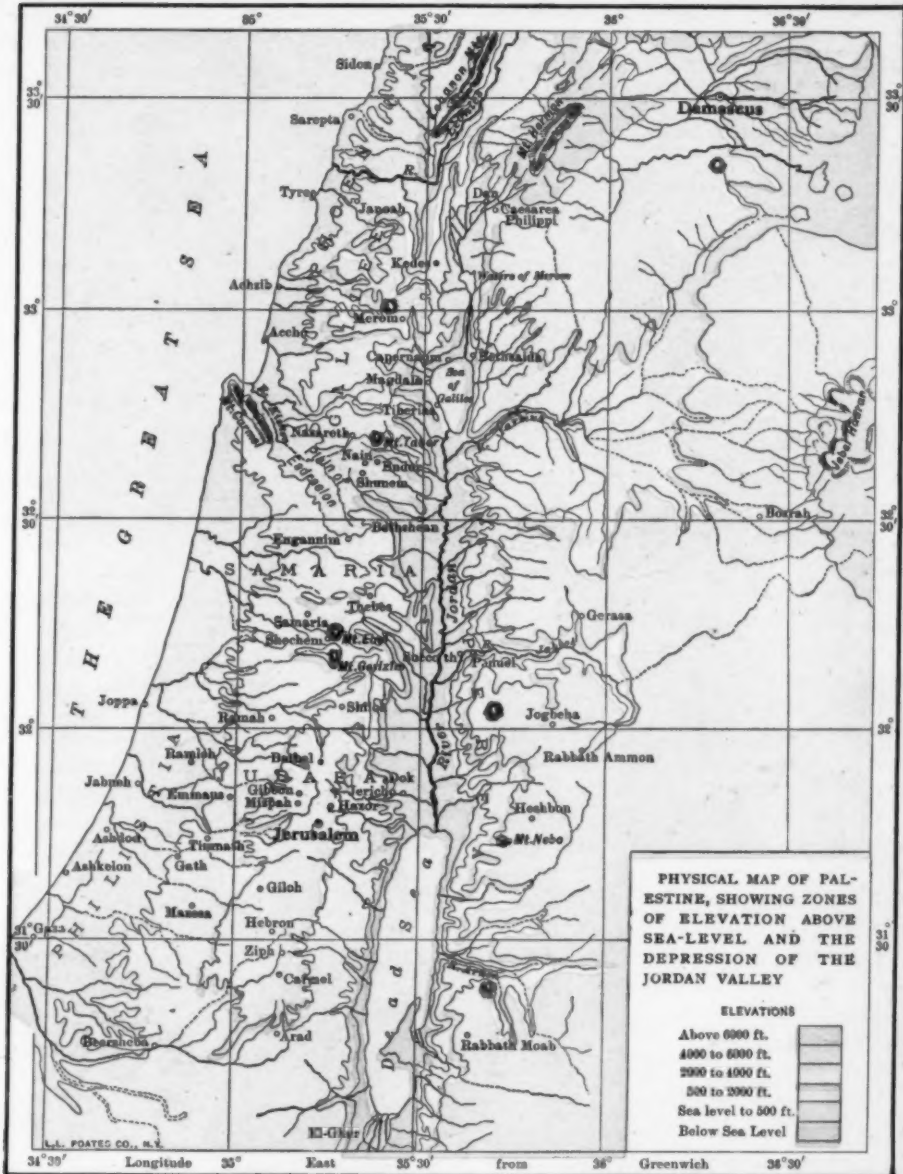
Fortunately for the Hebrews, Egypt fell into feebleness by 1150 B.C., while on the northeast there arose the friendly Aramean kingdom of Damascus, which for some centuries interposed a welcome barrier against the encroachments of Assyria. Under these circumstances the Hebrew nation was enabled to take firm root and to utilize its strength in defense against the lesser foes close at hand.

THE TWO HEBREW KINGDOMS

Chief among these foes, in earlier times, were the Philistines, an immigrant people from Crete, who settled in the great plain separating Judea from the sea and subjected the Israelitish tribes to continual annoyance. An ultimate effect of the Philistine wars was to precipitate the introduction of kingship among the Hebrews. It was in one of these contests that Saul, their first monarch (about 1020 B.C.), lost his life. Even the valor of Samson served only to keep somewhat in check the formidable pressure of Philistine power.

Under the beloved King David the power of the kingdom was extended far and wide. The fortress-town of Jebus—Jerusalem—from which the Canaanites had never been dislodged, and which was believed by its inhabitants to be impregnable, was captured, newly fortified, and made the capital of the country. Philistia was not subdued, but was put on the defensive.

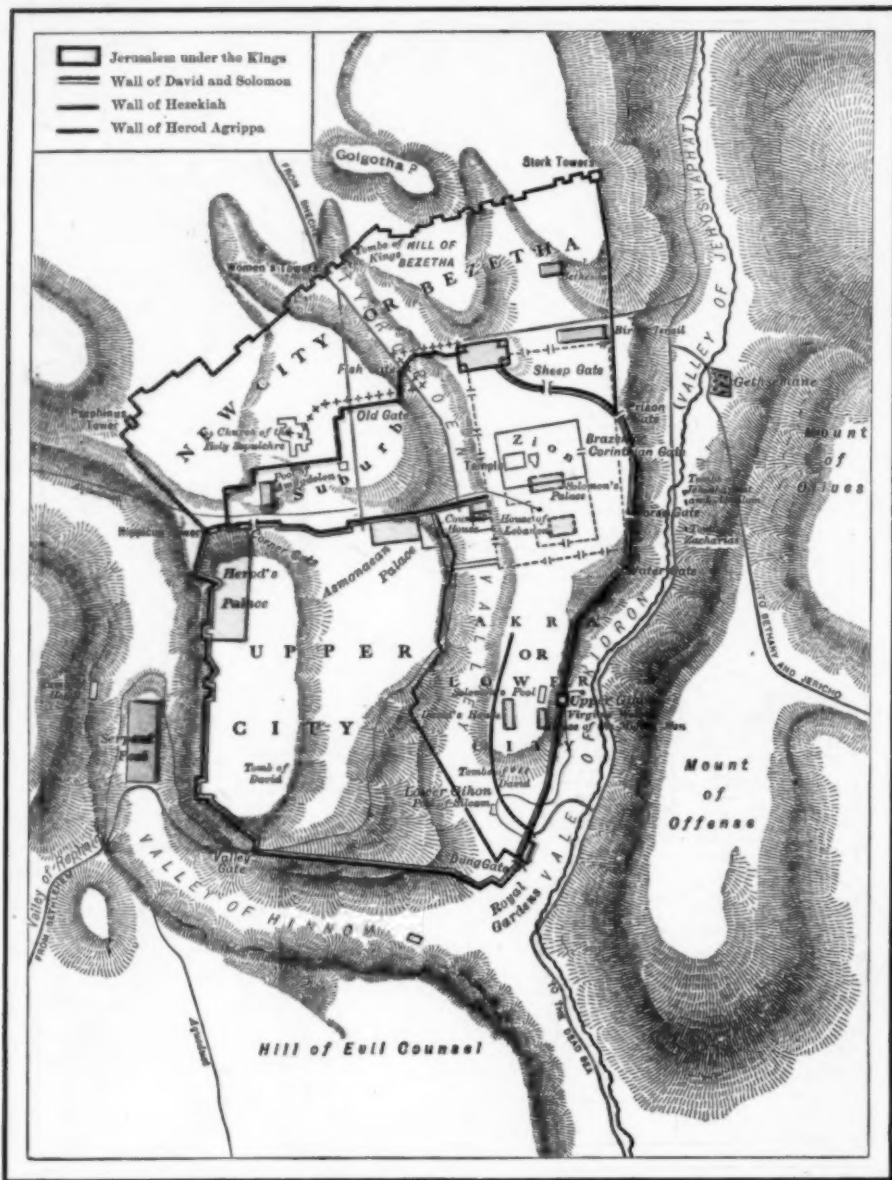
Solomon, David's son, and the builder of the Temple of Jerusalem, delighted in Oriental luxury and display, and burdened his people with taxes. Under his son Rehoboam the ten northern tribes seceded from the nation and set up a government of their own. Two tribes only, Judah and Benjamin, remained faithful to the house of David. These two thenceforth



formed the little kingdom of southern Palestine, known as Judah.

The northern kingdom, which was by far the larger, richer, and stronger of the two, was known as Israel. The capital of the one was Jerusalem; of the other, eventually Samaria. Relations between the two states were often unfriendly.

In the course of time, by the eighth century B.C., the art of writing on sheepskin and papyrus with the Egyptian pen and ink was acquired, and an alphabet was adopted from the Phoenicians. And stage by stage was produced the remarkable body of literature comprised in the Old Testament—notably the tales of the



MAP OF ANCIENT JERUSALEM, COVERING THE PERIOD FROM DAVID, WHO MADE IT THE CAPITAL OF HIS KINGDOM, TO HEROD AGRIPPA (A.D. 37-44)

patriarchs and other towering historic figures, and the criticisms, exhortations, and lamentations of Amos and his illustrious successors among the prophets.

From the outset Hebrew power existed only on sufferance, for there were always

within striking distance nations strong enough to destroy it. The blow was long delayed, but eventually it fell. Indeed, there was an irresistible succession of blows.

The first came from the great empire

of Assyria, which, under Sargon II and the succeeding members of his dynasty, was carrying on a series of western campaigns designed to extend its control to the Mediterranean. In 722 the kingdom of Israel was overwhelmed, and large numbers of its people were carried away as captives; while the Assyrian armies swept on until even Egypt was overrun and Asia Minor plundered.

For a century and a quarter the little kingdom of Judah was immune; but after the fall of Nineveh, in 606 B.C., when Assyrian power succumbed to the newly risen Chaldean kingdom, Chaldean lordship was established generally throughout Palestine and Syria. In 586 the far-famed Nebuchadnezzar fell upon the surviving Hebrew state, captured and destroyed Jerusalem after an eighteen months' siege, and carried away a part of the people to Babylonia. Most of the remaining population, including the prophet Jeremiah, took refuge in Egypt.

The fall of Jerusalem and the collapse of the kingdom of Judah mark the end of the independent Hebrew nation. Ammonites, Edomites, Philistines spread over the conquered country, and the brilliant hopes of centuries seemed effectually extinguished.

The ascendancy of Chaldea was, however, brief. Like the flash of a meteor in the eastern sky arose the power of the Persian kingdom under Cyrus the Great, and within sixty-five years after Assyria was overwhelmed by Chaldea, Chaldea was subdued by Persia.

At the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah had predicted that the period of Hebrew captivity would not exceed seventy years. In point of fact, it was but forty-eight years until Cyrus, with remarkable humanity, issued a decree granting permission to the exiles to return to their home country.

The return was accomplished, the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt on a modest scale, the Temple was restored, and the old worship was resumed. The political authority of Persia, however, was maintained, and

the Hebrews in Palestine after the exile formed rather a religious community, or church, than a nation. Judea, as the whole of the country occupied by the Hebrews was now called, was but an insignificant province of an empire which stretched from the coasts of Asia Minor to the Indus.

By no means all of the Hebrews were now gathered in Judea. Thousands remained in Babylonia; large communities were settled in Mesopotamia, Syria, the seaport towns of Asia Minor, and the Egyptian delta; many were compelled to serve in the Persian armies; while as traders, slaves, and prisoners of war, other thousands were scattered to the remotest corners of the empire, and even beyond its borders. Already the Jew was becoming a cosmopolitan figure.

Gradually, too, the Jews dropped their own language and took up the Aramaic dialect, the speech most commonly employed by the peoples by whom they were surrounded. Aramaic "was the language of business and of government in the countries between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, just as English is in the Highlands of Scotland; and so the Jews forgot their own tongue for it, as the Scottish Celts are now forgetting Gaelic for English." By the time of Christ, Hebrew was unintelligible to the mass of the Jewish people.

ALEXANDER AND THE PTOLEMIES

Aside from a fruitless revolt at the middle of the fourth century, Palestine during the two hundred years of Persian rule enjoyed comparative tranquillity. Then the battle of Issus (333 B.C.) and the overthrow of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great involved a change of masters and marked the beginning of a more unsettled era.

After the conqueror's death the country was for a time included in the satrapy of Syria, but in 320 the Hellenic ruler of Egypt, Ptolemy Soter, subdued it, and for more than a hundred years it was governed from Alexandria. Alexander had settled

in the newly founded city which bore his name a large body of Jews, who in wealth and culture became preeminent among their race. Under the Ptolemies many others were attracted, or compelled to remove, to the land of the Nile.

From a point early in the Persian domination the Jews had been drawn into ever-increasing contact with the genius and culture of the Greeks, and in the post-Alexandrian era this interrelationship was productive of large change in Jewish thought and character. In Alexandria and other centers the religion of Judea encountered both the cults of Egypt and the refined paganism of the Greeks; and while, as a whole, the worshippers of Jehovah steeled themselves resolutely against the insidious pollutions of heathenism, they were Hellenized against their will.

To this result the benevolent policies of the Ptolemies contributed much. It was the liberal-minded Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247) who encouraged the preparation of the Greek version of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint.

THE MACCABEAN ERA

Near the close of the third century B.C. Palestine was wrested from the Ptolemies by Antiochus the Great, King of Syria, and thenceforward until 161 B.C. Judea was a province of Syria. Here intervenes one of the darkest chapters in Jewish history. Antiochus, who was of an intolerant disposition, was bent upon the utter eradication of Judaism, and in 168 he fell furiously upon his Jewish subjects and enjoined the abandonment of every belief and practise that was sacred to the race. Some outwardly yielded, but many chose to die rather than "profane the holy covenant." The agonies suffered by the faithful find an echo in a number of the Psalms, notably the forty-fourth and the seventy-ninth.

Under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, the greatest warrior that the Hebrew world ever produced, the outraged people carried on a stubborn struggle for

their liberties. They won such success that, despite the defeat and death of Judas in 161, the Syrian monarch was constrained to grant them the privilege of living "after their own laws, as they did before."

Following the death of Antiochus, Syria fell into decadence, and the population of Judea was enabled to make itself, for the first time in centuries, entirely independent. A new monarchy—that of the Maccabean priest-princes—arose and flourished for almost eighty years. Internal dissensions, however, weakened it, and in any event the fact that it stood in the path of Rome's eastward advance was sufficient to presage its doom.

JUDEA UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The Roman conquest of Judea fell in the year 63 B.C. It was accomplished by Pompey during the course of his third great series of campaigns on the Roman frontiers, and culminated in the capture of Jerusalem after a three-months' siege, and the carrying away of King Aristobulus to grace the general's triumph at Rome.

For seventy years the country remained a partially autonomous dependency, under local princes, called tetrarchs, who were required to acknowledge the suzerainty of Rome. In the year 6 of our era, however, it was formally annexed to the province of Syria and placed in charge of a procurator resident at Cæsarea.

It was during the reign of one of these dependent princes, Herod the Great, that the birth of Jesus took place at Bethlehem, nominally in the first year of the Christian era, although actually, as modern scholarship has disclosed, about six years earlier. Despite his cruelty, Herod was a shrewd ruler, friendly to the Roman power, and it was only after his death and the dismemberment of his dominions that it became necessary for Rome to establish direct control over the Jewish lands. Throughout the ministry of Jesus, Judea was Roman territory in the fullest sense, and it was an emissary of "Cæsar"—the procurator Pontius Pilate—who, at

the insistence of the "chief priests and elders," sanctioned the crucifixion.

Roman rule in Judea proved harsh and unsympathetic, and was productive of much disaffection and of occasional revolts. In a supreme effort to reduce the country to order, Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian, subjected Jerusalem, in 70 A.D., to one of the most terrible sieges recorded in history; and the blow which fell, after the capture of the city, was such that full recovery from it was never possible. Multitudes gathered within the walls for protection were slaughtered, the Temple was demolished, and the wretched remnants of the people were scattered to all quarters of the earth. The "dispersion," begun in the early days of Assyrian and Babylonian conquest, now reached completion, and the Jew became what he ever since has remained—a wanderer on the face of the earth.

Even after the conquest by Titus the few Jews who remained in Palestine clung to the dream of a revived nationality, and by this aspiration they were impelled again and again to rebel against the Roman authority. The final suppression of their hopes fell to the Emperor Hadrian.

Following an outbreak of 132-135, Hadrian recaptured Jerusalem, and, changing its name to Aelia Capitolina, turned it into a Roman colony, built a temple to Jupiter on the site of the Holy Sepulcher, and forbade any Jew, on pain of death, to appear within sight of the city. The spirit of resistance was at last broken, and the leaders of the people thenceforth gave up politics and war and contented themselves with legal and religious studies in the rabbinical schools.

Until late in the Roman era the country was immune from foreign interference, and its internal quiet was broken only by occasional persecution of the Jews after the empire had become nominally Christian. In the first half of the seventh century, however, the smooth course of events was rudely interrupted. In the year 611 Chosroes II, King of Persia, invaded Syria, and, in the course of his conquest

of the province, sacked Jerusalem and destroyed numerous shrines of both Jew and Christian.

THE COMING OF THE MOSLEMS

After eighteen years the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius recovered the lost territory; but his success was ephemeral, for almost immediately the wave of Mohammedan conquest reached the country, and in 636 Byzantine power in Syria and Palestine was overthrown forever.

Under Moslem rule the fortunes of the Holy Land were unsettled. Much of the time both Jews and Christians were dealt with in a spirit of moderation; but occasional fanatical outbreaks caused widespread destruction of property and life, and the dissensions and civil wars by which the eastern Moslem world was perennially cursed added to the generally unsatisfactory situation of the non-Moslem population.

That the sacred places of Palestine should be in the possession of "infidels" was bitterly resented by many Christians of the West, and by the closing decade of the eleventh century conditions had shaped themselves favorably for a gigantic attempt to rescue Jerusalem and its environs and bring them again under Christian control.

From the time when, in 326, Helena, the mother of Constantine, paid her memorable visit to the scenes of the life of Jesus, there had flowed to the Holy Land a steady stream of Christian pilgrims. It was the reports of fresh indignities suffered by pilgrims at the hands of the new lords of Palestine in the eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks, that lent force to the call first sounded by Pope Urban II at Clermont in 1095.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE CRUSADES

The records of the Crusades form at the same time one of the most dramatic and one of the most melancholy chapters in human history. Throughout full two hundred years, in all, the propagandists labored devotedly to organize soldiers and

colonists for the conquest and occupation of the Moslem lands—first of all Palestine, but eventually the infidel territories everywhere.

For fifty or sixty years the effort was moderately successful. In 1099 Jerusalem was taken, a Christian knight, Godfrey of Bouillon, was set up as "Defender of the Holy Sepulcher," and four little Christian states, stretching along the east Mediterranean coast from the ancient Negeb to the district about Edessa, were established under feudal governments.

When, however, these states began inevitably to crumble before the rebound of Moslem power, heroic efforts to bolster them up failed. In 1190-1191 the three mightiest monarchs of Europe—Frederick Barbarossa, Philip Augustus, and Richard Cœur de Lion—were unable conjointly to stay the reaction, or even to recover the lost stronghold of Jerusalem.

Thereafter the resident Christian population of Palestine surrendered entirely to the allurements of peaceful intercourse with the Moslems, while in Europe it became steadily more difficult to interest men in crusading enterprises. Such campaigns as were undertaken were diverted from their purpose, or came to some untimely end.

In 1291—a little less than two hundred years after the preaching of Urban II and Peter the Hermit—the last Christian foothold in the Holy Land, Acre, was abandoned. The rule of the Mohammedan had suffered but momentary interruption, and the sojourn of the Christian was evidenced by little save the ruins of castles and churches, a few place-names, and the infusion of a slight European strain in the population.

Following the conquests of Saladin, whose capture of Jerusalem in 1187 precipitated the Third Crusade, Palestine and Syria were ruled for more than three hundred years by Moslem sovereigns resident in Egypt. Early in the sixteenth century, however, the territories were wrested from the Egyptian Mamelukes by the Sultan Selim I, a powerful representative of the

race of Ottoman Turks, which in 1453 had captured Constantinople. It was at this point that the Holy Land became, as it remains to-day, an integral part of the Ottoman Empire.

UNDER THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The change of rulers produced small effect. Certain of the abler Sultans at Constantinople projected public works in the country, and in 1537 Suleiman the Magnificent undertook to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. As in the Middle Ages, the trade routes traversing the provinces were crowded with traffic; but on the whole, as one writer has said, Palestine ceases for almost three hundred years after the Ottoman occupation to have a history, "save the dreary record of the sanguinary quarrels of local sheiks, and of the oppression of the peasants by the various government officials."

Only at the close of the eighteenth century, when Napoleon penetrated the country from Egypt in a fruitless attempt to instigate revolt against Constantinople, does the Holy Land again emerge from obscurity. In 1831 a complicated chain of circumstances culminated in the siege and capture of Acre by Ibrahim Pasha, son of the governor of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, and the usurping Egyptian authority was extended over large portions of the country.

But in 1840 the Turks, with the aid of England, France, and Austria, regained control. Profiting by the experience, they drew the affairs of the province yet more closely into their hands, and kept them so thereafter.

JEWISH COLONIES IN PALESTINE

From 1850 interest in Palestine centers in a succession of efforts to build up in the country a new, and especially a Jewish, population. Aside from establishments of monastic orders, the earliest of nineteenth-century colonies in the Holy Land were certain ill-fated settlements planted by American visionaries, notably a Mrs. Minor, whose purpose it was, about

sixty-five years ago, to prepare the Holy Land for the expected Second Advent.

Beginning in 1868, there were founded in Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem colonies of German peasants, which are the most important European communities now in the country. A visit paid to them in 1896 by the present Kaiser laid emphasis, in picturesque manner, upon the peculiar political and economic interest which Germany has had in their development.

During the past forty years there has been a considerable immigration of Jews into the country. The Jewish population now numbers about eighty thousand, the principal element in it being the "native Jews," who are chiefly descendants of exiles from Spain and Portugal. The settled Jewish population is, however, very heterogeneous, being drawn from all lands, and having no well-defined tie save community of religious interest. To it are being added constantly fresh elements, coming principally from Russia, Rumania, and other seats of anti-Semitism.

The planting of Jewish agricultural colonies has been undertaken by a number of philanthropic individuals and societies. In this connection one recalls especially Sir Moses Montefiore and the Baron Edmond de Rothschild, and, among societies, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the Society for the Assistance of German Jews, and the Jewish Colonization Association. Only a moderate degree of success, however, has been attained; and no inconsiderable portion of the charitable outlay of the Jewish people throughout the world continues to be expended in the relief of indigent coreligionists in Palestine, both colonists and natives.

The great bulk of the Jewish people have throughout their checkered history clung to the dream of a revival of their national life in Judea. Within the past half-century the idea has received encouragement from many western statesmen, including not only Lord Beaconsfield, but Lord Palmerston, Lord Salisbury, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain; and in 1876 the nationalist spirit from which it sprang

found powerful expression in George Eliot's "Daniel Deronda."

THE MODERN ZIONIST MOVEMENT

Various schemes looking to the realization of the dream had been propounded and cast aside, until at length, in 1896, Dr. Theodore Herzl, a Viennese journalist and playwright, published in a pamphlet entitled "The Jewish State" a plan which, by reason of its boldness and attractiveness, created a sensation throughout the world. The proposal, in a word, was to set up in Judea, with international support, a tribute-paying Jewish republic under the suzerainty of the Sultan.

A Zionist organization, forthwith founded to promote the project, held its first congress at Basel in 1897, and successive annual congresses took important steps calculated to aid the cause. By 1910 Zionism numbered among its active leaders such men as Dr. Max Nordau and Israel Zangwill, and had the avowed support of more than three hundred thousand Jews in every part of the world. Repeated negotiations with the Porte, however, led to nothing, and it has grown steadily more doubtful whether the objects of the movement can be attained.

In the first place, Turkey will not willingly relax her hold upon the coveted country. In the second place, were she—under necessity arising from the outcome of the present war, or from some other circumstance—to do so, Christendom, especially the Roman and Greek churches, might not be willing to see the Holy Land pass into Jewish hands.

And in the third place, should these obstacles be overcome, any Jewish state that could be established would almost certainly be disrupted by the inevitable conflict between orthodox and ritualistic tendencies, on the one hand, and the more liberal and secular influences of the times in which we live. A Levitical state in the twentieth century would be an impossibility. Yet if the proposed state were not Hebrew to the core, it would have small reason for existence.

The Little Gray Gown

A Christmas Story

by

Reginald
Wright Kauffman



"THERE'S queer things happen right here in little old N' York," says Pearl. "You bet you I believe in dreams! But this wasn't none—and that ain't no dream, neither!"

She was frightened by her new adventure. If her mother and sister at home guessed that she was on the stage, they would mourn her as one embarked for perdition; and the girl herself knew that a career in the chorus has its hazards.

Her mind, therefore, was troubled, inattentive; but she was certain that she had observed a small carpenter-shop in the basement of the building on the corner of Forty-Seventh Street as her taxi drew up before the theatrical boarding-house where she was to live. She recalled the shop when, as she knelt before her trunk in the shabby hall bedroom, the lock refused to respond to its key.

"They's a locksmith over on Six' Av'nue," said the bony landlady; "but you guessed wrong about the carpenter-shop; they ain't none."

Miss Fenton said she would see. The autumnal twilight was already deepening, but she found the shop immediately. It was a very little shop, and dimly lighted, but it smelled sweetly of cedar shavings,

and in it, behind a plank that he was planing, stood the carpenter.

He was a fair young man, slender, but strong. The rolled-up sleeves revealed sinewy forearms; the bust-piece of the overalls was strained across a vigorous chest.

"Say," began Pearl, "there's somethin' gone phony about the lock o' my trunk—"

And then she stopped, for she found herself looking straight into the young man's face, and it was a rather startling face. It was so fresh and calm, and so unlike the faces belonging to that part of Manhattan. It was thin, but ascetic rather than dissipated, and the eyes were serene and steady. Pearl somehow felt that they were at once far away from everything and observant of everything, that they at once realized and forgave.

"And you want me to repair the lock?" the carpenter was asking.

Miss Fenton had passed two weeks interviewing theatrical agents and, what is harder, waiting to interview them. A fortnight of that gives a girl either the timidity that spells failure or the forwardness that sometimes commands success, and Miss Fenton had got an en-

gagement. She was conscious now that she had been looking at this carpenter in much the manner in which the agents wanted her to look at them, and she was conscious that the carpenter, however gently, disapproved. She resented disapproval; she resolved that she did not like this young man.

"You're a mind-reader, you are!" she said.

He paid no attention to her irony.

"I'll come," he replied.

The voice made her relent.

"I know it ain't your sort o' work—"

"I do all sorts of work."

It closed discussion. Not another word was uttered until they stood before the opened trunk. A brilliant costume—as brief as it was brilliant—lay atop—the costume that Miss Fenton was to wear in the first act of "Everybody's Doin' It." The carpenter's hand dived beneath this and drew out, almost tenderly, a little gown of gray silk.

"That is pretty," he said. "It is sweet and simple; it is like you."

"Don't get gay!" she snapped.

She snatched the frail thing from his work-stained hands. She was amazed by his action. She was more amazed by the level gaze with which he met her amazement; it was not at all the gaze of a man who was trying to "get gay."

"What do I owe you?" she demanded.

"Nothing," said the carpenter.

He said it as if he had said "everything"—not "everything" in the sense in which Higgins, the stage-manager, had meant it, and yet—perhaps this man thought himself above such a job as she had given him.

"Here's fifty cents," said Pearl.

"No, thank you!" The carpenter smiled. "Just remember my address. I'll be there when you need me."

That was his farewell.

II

PEARL FENTON's real name was Sadie Collins. She came from Thomasport, Pennsylvania. She was pretty. She was

entering a New York chorus at eighteen per—and she had been, and intended to continue, a good girl.

When Sadie left Thomasport to learn her trade in an establishment styling itself the Metropolitan Millinery College, her mother, who remained at home, made the girl what she had always wanted—a silk dress. It was soft and clinging. Sadie thought it grand; but, at her first dance in the city, the girls laughed at it, and Sadie cried and hid it away.

She was ashamed of the dress now, but she didn't quite like to part with it. So she took it with her when she embarked upon her new adventure, after she had discovered that the Metropolitan Millinery College was a sweat-shop, where you paid for the privilege of giving labor and learning nothing.

Sadie did not write home about her change of vocation. Her father, a locomotive fireman, had been killed in a minor wreck a decade before. Her mother had worked hard for the two hundred dollars, payable in advance, demanded by the alleged institution of learning; so Sadie, who had a pleasant voice and a good figure, and thought the stage what the stage thinks itself, penned vague letters to Mrs. Collins and looked for a job in the chorus.

She got one. Not all theatrical agents are reptilian, and Sadie was lucky. This, during the weeks that followed her installation at Mrs. Dougherty's boarding-house, and the immediate success of "Everybody's Doin' It," continued her in the belief that the hard work which she performed, and the talent which she possessed, would suffice to advance her.

She gave no attention to the other girls, when both their words and their deeds scouted such fantastic ideas. She gave less to Higgins, the tobacco-chewing stage-manager, when he frankly offered her a substitute theory—she turned Higgins down. She wrote home that she had graduated from the college and was earning real money in a real shop. Her weekly letter enclosed a five-dollar bill,

She forgot the carpenter on the corner, but she came to adore Mallison, the big and handsome manager of her show. He was so well-dressed, and so kindly, and so—well, somehow so removed. As yet he did not appear to know her from the other members of the chorus; but some day, if she only worked along, he would detect her talent and give her a real part. He would give her the one thing she asked—a chance!

She began to dream a good deal about Mallison—shyly, at first, and with a vagueness that would have met accusation by angry denial; but she began to dream of him, nevertheless. Sadie was small, and Mallison was large; she was blond, and he was dark; her existence was difficult, and he represented ease. He represented power, too.

The world of the theater, which appears so broad from without, is narrow enough from within. Its people, who seem to touch life at so many points, touch it, in reality, at one only. They are shut-ins; the heights and depths of stage-folk are the heights and depths of the stage. Mallison was to Sadie what the Great King at Ctesiphon was to any dancing-girl of Seleucia; but there are stories of dancing-girls who have married kings.

One evening in November, when the chorus filled the wings, waiting to go on in the "Jack o' Lantern Song," Sadie found herself pressed close to the manager, who was standing there in conversation with the stage-director. She fluttered; she became awkward; she knocked over a vase that belonged to the third-act set, and the vase smashed across Mr. Mallison's patent-leather pumps.

"Now then, Miss Jersey Holstein!" growled Higgins. "Can't you look where you're goin'?"

Sadie's mortification blinded her for a long second. She wished she were back in Thomasport; she wished she were dead; but presently she saw Mr. Mallison smiling at her with a flash of splendid teeth and a radiant countenance.

"No harm done, young lady," he was saying. "I had no business being here." His look gathered a something of admiration that drove Sadie's heart into her throat. "I don't think I've met you yet. Do you mind telling me your name?"

After that, Higgins was uglier to her than ever, because of the slight to him implied in Mallison's civility to her; but Sadie didn't care. She was happy, because Mallison always smiled his flashing smile whenever they passed—and the girl was no less than human if she arranged some passages.

What the archbishop is to the curate, the star is to the chorus. To the chorus, marriage with a successful manager is what the Supreme Bench is to the lawyer. What if Sadie should some day become a star? What if the star should some day marry her manager?

She pawned her watch and held back her rent from Mrs. Dougherty, and went into debt to a Sixth Avenue shop for a gorgeous red evening gown. Such a dress would have shocked Thomasport, but Sadie hoped she might some time wear it when Mr. Mallison might see her, for it was a dress worthy of his attention. She had almost nothing left for a couple of trifling gifts for her mother and Maude; but she now thought Mr. Mallison the most wonderful of created beings.

III

CHRISTMAS fell on a Tuesday. She couldn't go home for the holiday, because the gods of the theater are conservative gods, and stick to their tradition of a Christmas matinée and evening performance in the face of fifty years of money lost. She could get to Thomasport for the Sunday preceding, however, and she did so.

She let her mother weep on her shoulder after the long separation, and wept a little herself. She told glib lies about the rush season at the store, and made a mental vow to set her mother up for life just so soon as she was a star and could speak the truth. Then she let her sister Maude

admire her new clothes, and felt better; but, although she had brought the new evening gown home with her, she didn't show it.

For Sunday evening's church she got out her old gray dress, as a tribute to her mother. Somehow she felt reminiscently sad again as she put it on, although her unreasonable depression vanished before the rays of Mrs. Collins's warm delight.

Some decoration, however, was necessary to accentuate, before the congregation, her metropolitan superiority. Her mother had just given Maude a Christmas present—an expensive gold watch. There was only a fountain-pen left for Sadie, because Sadie was doing so well at the store. Maude already valued her watch above all earthly possessions, but she generously let Sadie pin it on the bosom of the gray gown.

The occasion was a triumph. After service everybody gathered about Sadie and said how well she was looking, and praised her and envied her. The minister came around and shook hands with her, and spoke knowingly of Union Square and the World Building. He had once visited New York, twenty years ago. The ovation almost reconciled Sadie to the tearful farewell of Maude and her mother on the bleak Monday morning.

Sadie was due at the Pennsylvania Terminal at seven o'clock. A freight wreck held up the train for an hour ten miles south of Newark, and far from a telegraph-station; in consequence, Sadie missed the curtain of that evening's performance.

In ordinary circumstances this would have meant a fine, but the element of Higgins made it extraordinary. Higgins met her at the stage-door and told her that she was fired.

In spite of Mrs. Collins's gift of an expensive watch to Maude—the poor are so extravagant!—Sadie's family needed her weekly contribution. Sadie needed her weekly bread and butter and her hall bedroom. She had seventy-five cents and a powder-puff in her ornate purse; she

was in debt to her dressmaker; she was behind with her rent to Mrs. Dougherty; her own watch was in pawn, and she had lost her job.

She immediately thought of Mallison, chiefly because she had, of late, been thinking of nobody else. She knew that he was busy in the upper office, "counting up," but she sent in her name to him.

"No!" she heard him bellow through the closed door. "I can't see—Who'd you say? Oh! Wait a minute."

The upper office opened on the back aisle of the balcony. There were hundreds of people seated near her, and the house was alight. As Mallison came out, she thought that she had never seen him handsomer. He was in evening clothes; dark and cool he looked, and his eyes and teeth gleamed.

"Hello, Miss Fenton!" he said. "What are you doing out in front?"

Her trouble sped her tongue. A score of words sufficed for her story.

Mallison did not seem to be listening. He looked at her appraisingly, approvingly; but he appeared to hesitate.

"I am busy just now," he said; "but of course I don't want to see a pretty girl in trouble."

He stopped abruptly, forcing her to speak.

"It wasn't my fault," she pleaded. "Higgins had it in for me."

Mallison abruptly excused himself. He turned back to the office and gave an order. Two men who had been in there came out.

"I'll be ready for you in ten minutes," he said to them, and then to Sadie: "Come in here, out of the crowd!"

She followed him into the office. It was a small room, with a roll-top desk and a telephone in one corner, and in the center a table, on which towered the ticket-boxes, a heap of torn cardboard between them. Mallison closed the door and wheeled a swivel-chair toward her from its place before the desk.

"Sit down there and make yourself comfortable," he said.

It was his own chair—the chair from which he directed the destinies of "Everybody's Doin' It." To Sadie's eyes, it was an Olympian throne. She drew back.

"Oh, Mr. Mallison!" she protested.

"Sit down," he kindly insisted.

She obeyed, her heart thumping. Long ago, in the Thomasport high school, she had learned a poem by heart. It was in the Fifth Reader. How did it go?

Barefooted came the beggar maid
Before the King Cophetua.

The lines ran in her head as Mallison drew beside her a chair for himself.

"Now, then," he said, "you have just time to tell me all about it."

Sadie's brain was behaving like a canoe in a heavy surf.

"But I have told you!"

She wanted to put her hands before her eyes and shut out what must be only a cheating dream:

Cophetua sware a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

"Yes, I know," Mallison was saying. "But you told me Higgins had it in for you. Why?"

The dream might cheat, but she didn't want to break it by the sordid truth of Higgins's early approaches.

"Because—" She recalled the incident of the vase, and mentioned it.

"Was that all?"

Mallison's eyes narrowed. She had to say it.

"Well, he—he tried to get fresh at the very first rehearsals."

"Oh!"

The manager smiled broadly. There was something about his smile that startled her a little. Again she wanted to shut her eyes—this time not in order to dismiss the dream, but to retain it.

"That's right," she said.

"No tales out of school, Miss Fenton! Higgins is a good director."

He was a good stage-manager, and of course Mr. Mallison had to think of that. Sadie could only insist:

"He tried to get fresh."

The manager's response was a quick question:

"You turned him down?"

"Sure I did!" She felt the flush on her cheeks. "And now he's getting back at me, Mr. Mallison."

She sat there with the dream trembling on the threshold of departure; innocent, but desperate now, she sat there. Mallison was still looking at her.

"I don't like to interfere with my subordinates," he said.

Mightily, Sadie wrenched herself away from everything but the forlorn consideration of her economic straits.

"Oh, Mr. Mallison, if you could only fix things up!"

The manager shifted in his chair. He leaned forward.

"I should hate to lose you." He hesitated; he glanced at his watch. She knew that the ten minutes were nearly up. "I might square Higgins," he said.

Was that all?

"I—I—it wasn't my fault," repeated Sadie.

She rose; she started for the door. Mallison followed her and put a detaining hand on her shoulder. His voice dropped, as if he had suddenly remembered the hundreds of people on the other side of that door.

"You run home," he almost whispered, "and get on your glad rags. Then go over to Rector's and ask for my table. I'll have a table for two—for us two—and we'll see Christmas Day come in. Then—you may have a future ahead of you, little girl!"

His hand had slipped to her arm; he had pressed her arm ever so slightly.

The door closed behind her. She was alone in the crowd of the theater. A minute later she was alone in the crowd of Broadway—a happy, holiday-making, money-spending crowd. She was alone in it with her complete understanding of all that Mallison meant.

She started instinctively toward her boarding-house. She was in a whirlpool

of despair that was sucking her down, and she had only to put out her hand to be rescued. She had only to be what nearly all of her companions were, and she would have a future before her.

The dream? Well, there are many ways to marriage. She had heard of managers who married—afterward.

IV

AN expressman was taking in her trunk at Mrs. Dougherty's door. The landlady handed her a telegram, accompanying that action with a distinctly ironic comment upon Sadie's early return and a broad hint about the overdue rent. Sadie gave the expressman fifty cents of her seventy-five.

Then, solitary in her hall bedroom, she opened and read the telegram:

Where is my watch?—MAUDE.

It was only another straw—the discovery that she had lost Maude's watch—but it seemed the final one. Outside were the crowds and lights and restaurants; outside Mallison would soon be waiting for her. Here—

She would do it. She would open the trunk and get out her red dress. She would claim her future!

The trunk lock misbehaved again. She could do nothing with it, and the minutes were flying. If she kept Mallison waiting, everything would be lost. She dared not call on Mrs. Dougherty's help.

She was mad with determination, angrily resolved. She beat at the lock with her fists. Then she darted into the street; there was one chance in a thousand that the carpenter might be working late to-night.

A dim light burned in his shop, but her knocking brought no answer. She wasted five precious minutes, and then rushed back to the boarding-house, decided to brave Mrs. Dougherty with a request for a hammer.

But somehow she went first to her own room—just to try once again.

Something had happened there. The trunk was open. Sadie dived into it; the red dress was gone!

Her first thought was of burglars. She tossed all her clothes upon the floor, but she could not find the red dress. She stood up, trembling with chagrin. Here was cruel luck! Here was her big chance ruined because of a dress!

And then she suddenly saw—there, lying neatly on the narrow bed, with Maude's watch still pinned to its bosom—the little gray gown!

"I was passing. You had left the front door open. I told you that I would be here if you needed me. I saw you go to my shop. I guessed that you might be having the old trouble—that you needed me now. So I came up here alone. You did need me. I thought that you would want the pretty gray dress for Christmas Day."

It was the carpenter speaking. How had she passed him? He stood on the threshold.

Sadie advanced toward him. What had the fool done with her other gown? Her hands were clenched, her eyes blazing.

"Well," she began, "of all the—Where's my red dress? Where's—"

But she did not finish. The carpenter, with a work-stained hand, pointed to the gray dress on the bed.

His face was very gentle; it was so pure, and so unlike the faces belonging to this part of Manhattan—so unlike Mallison's! His eyes were calm and steady; they saw all, and forgave. His face seemed to grow luminous; it was like a face that she had seen—

But the carpenter was not there at all!

Sadie fell on her knees beside the bed and pressed the gray silk dress to her dry lips.

"I guess," she sobbed, "I'll hit the trail for a new job on Wednesday—a new job at eighteen per!"

But Mrs. Dougherty had been right—there wasn't any carpenter-shop on the corner.

THE NEWSPAPER THE WORLD'S DIARY

by James Melvin Lee

Director of the Department of Journalism
New York University

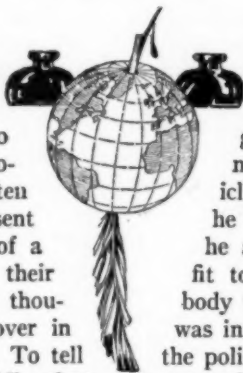
FROM the days when the Roman gatherer and seller of news mounted a little platform and dictated his news items to a dozen slaves, and thereby produced twelve copies of a written newspaper, down to the present time, when the huge presses of a metropolitan daily roll out their editions by the hundreds of thousands, is a long period to cover in the brief space of an article. To tell its story one must go so rapidly that only he who runs may read.

Even before the written newspapers there were news-letters which left Rome to carry the gossip of the city to various officials stationed in the provinces. Antony, for example, kept in touch with Roman politics and finance by means of such news-epistles.

In the year 51 B.C., when Cicero left for Cilicia, his friend Caelius promised to "write a full and careful account" of all that went on in Rome. The latter, being the "laziest man in the world at writing letters," shifted the correspondence to a professional writer of news, but later he did find time to send a line.

"If the news-letters do not give you what you want," he said, "let me know, for I don't want to spend my money only to bore you."

Incidentally it may be said that human nature has not changed much in this respect, for to-day the newspaper is often mailed as a substitute for the personal letter.



Cicero's reply was, in modern phraseology, "Stop my paper!" He did not care for the sporting news of gladiatorial matches; he did not want the court news, chronicling the adjournment of trials; he did not read with interest, so he asserted, the news that wasn't fit to write—"such things as nobody ventured to tell" him when he was in Rome. What he desired was the political news of the city, and reports of occurrences where there was something especially affecting himself. In the last suggestion he gave to the professional journalist at Rome a tip which the modern school of journalism follows when it instructs its students to put names into the newspaper.

THE FIRST ROMAN NEWSPAPER

First place in Roman journalism, however, belongs to Julius Caesar, another friend of our high-school days. One of his first acts after he became consul in 60 B.C., was to issue a decree that the reports of the doings of the senate should be daily written and published. Knowing the value of publicity, he hoped in this way to change the crooked politics of the time; at least, he was determined that no secret acts of the senate should interfere with his plans. The result of Caesar's decree was the establishment of that precursor of the modern daily newspaper, the *Acta Diurna*, or *Daily Acts*.

At first this daily compilation was published and displayed on a whitened wood-

en board, called *album* (white). In other words, the Romans got their news in the Forum, much as we often get an epitome of the latest events by standing and watching the bulletin-boards of the modern newspaper.

The reports of the Roman senate corresponded, in a way, to what we find in our *Congressional Record*, and contained—as our *Record* once did—the interruptions and the applause. As time went on, the doings of the senate received less space, while those of the people in general received more. Even scandal came to be featured in the *Daily Acts*, and society news, sent in by the families concerned, crowded out items about the state. Possibly this last practise was overdone, for Seneca once boasted that he did not insert his liberality in the *Daily Acts*.

In addition to the bulletin-board edition of the *Daily Acts*, there must later have been a written one for circulation in the home. One Latin author mentioned a Roman lady reading her morning paper, and another said that he would wait at Thessalonica for the *Daily Acts*. The professional sellers of news retailed the items of this compilation in their written news-letters sent to subscribers outside of Rome.

One other fact may be noticed in passing—both Julius and Augustus Cæsar knew how to “work the press.” The former secured good display in the *Daily Acts* when he declined the title of king, and the latter promoted his attack on race-suicide by inserting items about Romans who had large families.

THE BIRTH OF “YELLOW JOURNALISM”

The *Daily Acts* probably continued even after the capital had been moved from Rome to Constantinople. For fifteen centuries little advance was made in the written newspaper—unless the ability to manufacture news might in some way be considered a development. The ability to invent news and to mix truth and falsehood became almost a profession (*ars*) in Rome, and was carried to such

an extent that the church was forced to take drastic action.

Papal bulls were issued against the writing of such news-letters, under penalties recorded in both temporal and ecclesiastical laws. In 1572 the saintly Pope Pius V threatened “death and confiscation of property,” according to “the degree of the offense and the rank of the offender.” His successor, Gregory XIII, a great educationist, issued another bull which, while leaving all former laws about the news-letters in full force, declared that writers of *lettere d'avvisi* should be sent “to the galleys, either for life or for a term, without hope of pardon.”

But the written newspaper continued and spread, chiefly by way of Venice, to other countries. By 1600, what might be popularly called epistolary newspapers, were appearing in Italy, France, Germany, and England. It was, perhaps, in Germany that such sheets reached their highest development.

THE FIRST PRINTED NEWSPAPERS

After the invention of the printing-press, written newspapers survived until a time came when the number of subscribers was large enough to make it cheaper to print than to write the news. Even then the change to the printed sheet was not a sudden one, for at first one page was left blank, that the latest happenings might be inserted by pen.

In the case of China, however, the change was abrupt. Chinese publishers wasted no time by printing from movable type, but jumped at once from the hand-written newspaper to the impression from a wooden block. The news was written on a transparent sheet, pasted face downward on a wooden block, and then, save where the Chinese characters showed, the wood was chiseled away. The block was then inked, pressed upon a sheet of white paper, and lo, a printed newspaper!

In America, the newspaper has passed through the same forms as in other countries. The first was the written report sent by John Campbell, postmaster at

Boston, to the governors of the New England colonies upon the arrival of vessels from foreign ports. Other officials wanted this written news service, so Campbell printed his circular and called it the *Boston News-Letter*. It was the first regular American newspaper, though there had been several precursors in the shape of printed news-sheets of only one issue.

Of these the most important was *Publick Occurrences*, which might have been published once a month had not the first and only issue been suppressed by the Boston authorities. The *News-Letter*, being "published by authority," lasted from 1704 until the British evacuated Boston in the second year of the Revolutionary War. It was a rabid and sensational Tory sheet, or it might have survived even longer.

JOURNALISM IN COLONIAL DAYS

The colonial newspaper was something quite different from the "last edition" of the metropolitan daily. For example, the *Boston News-Letter* once boasted that it was less than five months behind in recording the news of Europe. And if the colonial editor omitted important local items, he should not be censured too severely. So long as he printed moral essays he was let alone, while if he ventured to give news of official acts he might have to edit his paper from the common jail.

At times he wrote so much of the paper that he spoke of himself as the author rather than the editor of the sheet. At best, his life was a hard one. Often he had to collect the rags for the mill, in order to make sure of a paper-supply for his press. Seldom, if ever, did his subscribers pay in advance. Frequently he had to appeal to the delinquents to "send the poor printer some flour, or a few hams, butter, cheese, poultry, *et cetera*."

To make both ends meet, the colonial printer-editor had to be in addition the local postmaster, book-dealer and stationer, or something of that sort. Be not too hard on him if, in extreme cases, he

had to sell quack medicines or to run a general store. With such extra burdens to carry, he had little time to gather fresh news.

Even if the colonial newspaper was simply a "broadside of stale news with a moral essay attached," it has been too much neglected by the historian, who should have searched it for the American entries in this interesting volume of the world's diary.

With the birth of the American republic came the freedom of the press. But the newspaper became the organ of the politician; the moral essay was discarded, and its space was given to the political editorial. Even the government conspired to turn the editor into a political mouthpiece of his party, by making him an office-holder or by bribing him with Federal advertising.

There was no systematic gathering of the news beyond the clipping of items from exchanges. Much of the best news was often the personal letter from a friend visiting in some other State. Later, in special cases, a pony express brought the news items, or a fast boat met incoming vessels and took off the news budget from abroad. The newspaper, still set and printed by hand, cost too much for the working man.

HOW SCIENCE SERVES THE NEWSPAPER

But the time for a new edition of the diary came. To print it, Hoe took the type from a flat bed and put it on a revolving cylinder. To set it, Mergenthaler told the compositor to cease distributing type into cases, and to cast a line at a time, to be thrown back, when used, into the melting-pot. To gather the news from its many writers, Morse stretched an electric wire from Dan to Beersheba and ran the same direct to the newspaper office.

To furnish the white paper, other inventors found cheap methods of manufacturing it from wood-pulp and of feeding it to the press from a huge roll. To make a late entry, another put a

"fudge" attachment upon the printing-press, so that even after the cylinders had started revolving a bulletin of the latest item or two might be printed on the front page—in a colored ink, if desired. To distribute the large edition, the government agreed to carry it at a cent a pound to points within the United States, and free of charge to all points within the county where it was published, save where delivery was made to homes by mail-carriers.

A city news association collected the local items in every field of industry. A press association, composed of newspapers scattered over the continent, sent in the happenings of national importance. An international bureau of the four great news-gathering organizations literally watched the four corners of the world. In addition, a special corps of reporters and correspondents at strategic points, not only at home, but also abroad, supplemented but did not supplant the cooperative agencies.

The one-man commentator on the news became an editorial staff of several members. Their daily conferences made the

editorial "we" a truth and a reality. But they still left a column or two for the letters of "Pro Bono Publico" and "Veritas," and let the cartoon, in a wordless editorial, state the policy of the paper. Pegs were driven in the walls of the sanctum for the hats of the city editor, the sporting editor, the dramatic editor, the literary editor, the Sunday editor, the financial editor—and so on almost *ad infinitum*.

THE DAILY NEWSPAPER OF TO-DAY

This new edition of the world's diary, laid at your door, is the modern daily newspaper. Its cost, to-day, is often only a cent—the smallest coin of the realm. No other product manufactured gathers its parts from so many different lands; no other article has taken so many men to assist in its production.

Yet no other item of commerce has so short a life. It is literally fresh every night and new every morning. An hour or two, and its story is told; but the unprinted line of the last column always reads:

To be continued to-morrow.

THE NEW-BORN

Thou plastic mass of vaguely human mold!

What miracle is yet to live in thee?

Out of thy grublike form, wrapped fold on fold,

What mystic force developed is to be?

The eye that now scarce brooks the dawning light

Shall glow with fire that awes the jungle brute,

Or, melting, soothes faith's timorous affright,

And wins the pledge of love in manly suit.

The tongue that hath not framed the simplest word

Shall come to sway with eloquence sublime

The minds of men, to forceful action stirred

In some momentous matter of the time.

The brain that yet hath held no form of thought

Shall train to wrest the secret of the spheres

From star-mist, suns in endless systems wrought,

And mark the time of variants in years.

But thou shalt know the impotence of age,

The swift decline, the failing strength and sight,

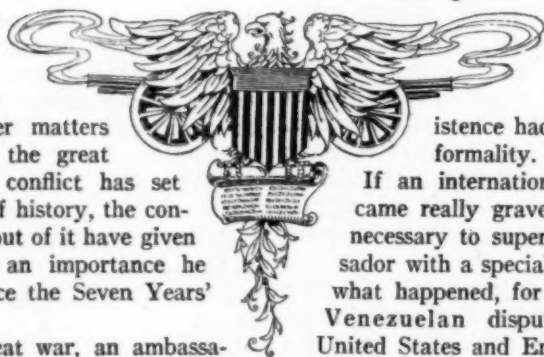
Despite the lore of teacher, priest, or mage,

And pass again into unfathomed night!

Charles Sloan Reid

OUR AMBASSADORS IN THE WAR ZONE

by
J.W. McConaughy



AMONG other matters in which the great European conflict has set back the clock of history, the conditions growing out of it have given the ambassador an importance he has not had since the Seven Years' War.

Before the great war, an ambassadorship to a European country had come to be considered a dignified job for a cultured gentleman who had no pressing business engagements at home. Only two qualifications were essential. He had to be able to make a neat speech—a witty one, if possible—and to be able to pay his house-rent out of his private pocket. If he passed in these matters, the republic wished him Godspeed, the New York reporters interviewed him for a hundred words at the pier as he sailed, and then most people promptly forgot all about him.

Five-day ocean steamers, wireless telegraphy, and a world-wide cable system had made of the ambassador a sort of exalted messenger-boy. In the old days he used to speak for sovereigns. In these latter days he merely delivered notes written in the foreign office of his home government. He made no decisions, bore few responsibilities. His ex-

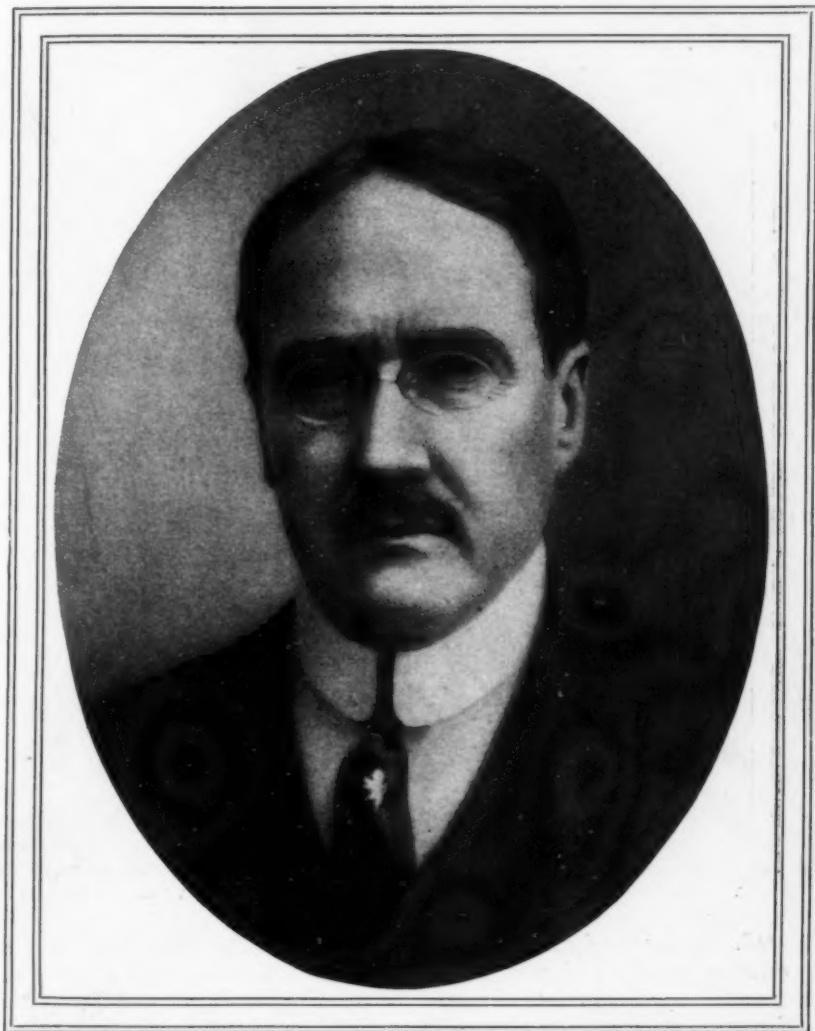
istence had become a mere formality.

If an international situation became really grave, it was usually necessary to supersede the ambassador with a special envoy. This is what happened, for example, in the Venezuelan dispute between the United States and England. We had at that time at the court of St. James a pleasant and polished gentleman, who desired nothing beyond the further cementing of the traditional friendship with the English people, for whom he entertained the deepest admiration. This was also the hope of the Washington government, but it meant to make its position clear with regard to the arbitration of the Venezuelan boundary question. Our ambassador could not believe it—it looked too much as if there were a chance that the cement might crack. It was finally necessary to send a trusted representative to London in order to explain exactly where this country stood, and why. Then the matter was adjusted.

During the present war there has not been, so far as can be observed, any similar occurrence. Seemingly, most of the purely diplomatic troubles of our ambassadors to the belligerent powers have been in convincing the foreign chancelleries

that our envoys really understood their country's position. At first glance this may seem strange, but it has been a very real problem.

and that therefore the United States government will follow a certain course of action. From his other sources of information, however, the chancellor is as-



JAMES W. GERARD, OF NEW YORK, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO GERMANY

The German chancellor, for instance, is in constant communication with the German Embassy in Washington, and probably with divers other German agencies throughout the United States. The American ambassador calls on him and tells him that thus and so is the situation,

sured that thus and so is not the situation, and that therefore the United States cannot do anything of the sort. He knows that Mr. Gerard has not been home for some years; that cipher despatches are more or less clumsy affairs, which sometimes cannot even be de-



WALTER HINES PAGE, OF NEW YORK, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO GREAT BRITAIN

ciphered. He is strongly inclined to trust his own ambassador and other agencies, who are right on the ground.

Of course, foreigners are always likely to be mistaken in their appraisals of the opinions and emotions of another people, and chancelleries do not allow a sufficient margin of error in this direction, even when nerves have not been jangled for months and months.

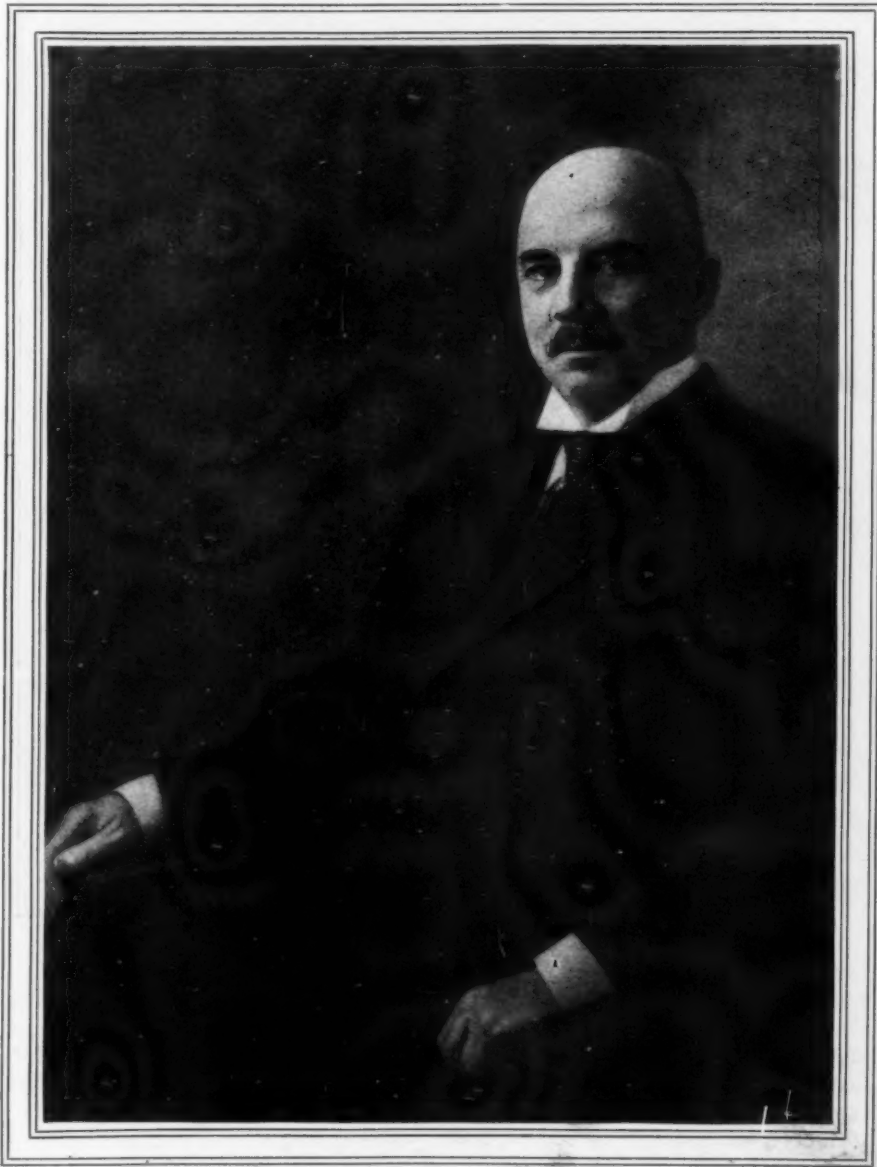
For instance, there is an oft-repeated story to the effect that Prince Lichnow-

sky, the German ambassador in London, assured the Kaiser, on the eve of his attack upon Russia and France, that England could not possibly go to war, confronted with open rebellion in Ireland and sedition in South Africa. Whether this is true or not is not especially material, but it is more than likely that the prince's reports created some such impression in Berlin. He knew that if the Irish situation existed in Bavaria, and the South African in Austria, war would be a

hazardous adventure for Germany. He simply failed to make sufficient allowance for certain racial differences.

We shall never know—or, at any rate, not until the war is over—just how serious a time Ambassador Gerard experienced in convincing the heads of the German government that the Sussex note

meant just what it said—that Germany must abandon her methods of submarine warfare or break with the United States. Nor shall we know whether Colonel House's mysterious mission was for the purpose of having an American spokesman, fresh from home, go about assuring certain important personages that our

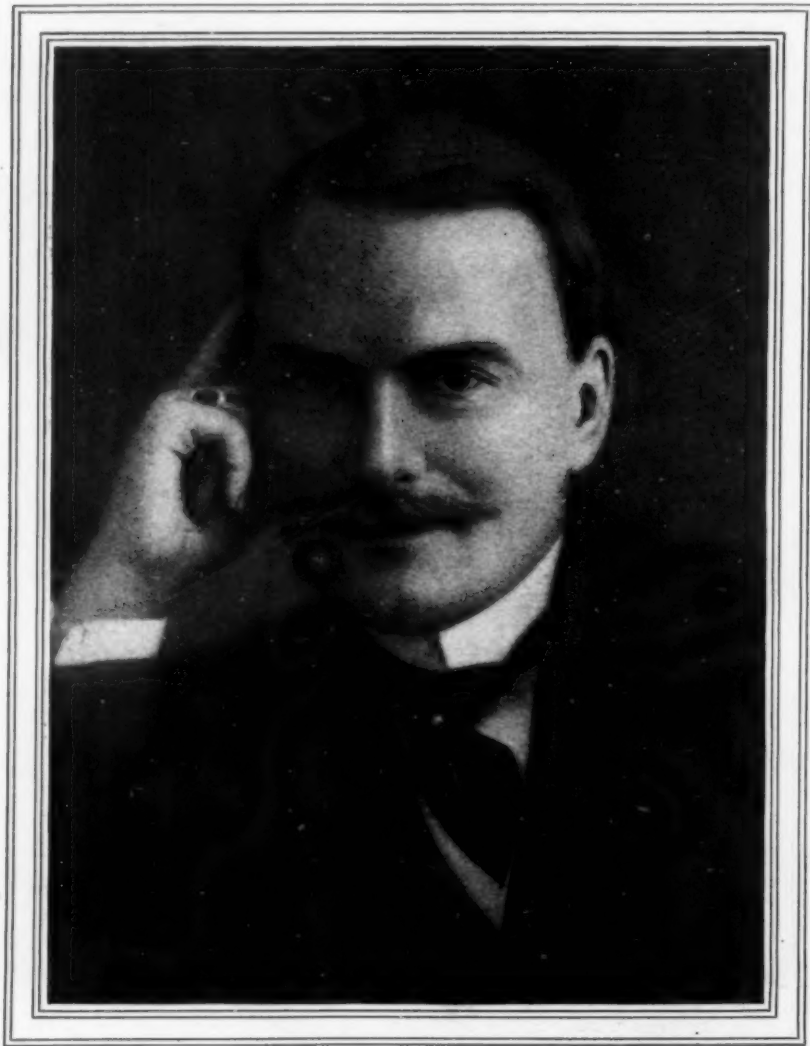


WILLIAM G. SHARP, OF OHIO, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE

diplomats were entirely correct in their interpretation of the position of the Washington government.

One of the duties that has thrown

the tremendous pressure of the emotions aroused by the war, this mere fact seemed to be enough to make the ambassador an object of suspicion. Mr. Gerard was



FREDERIC C. PENFIELD, OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

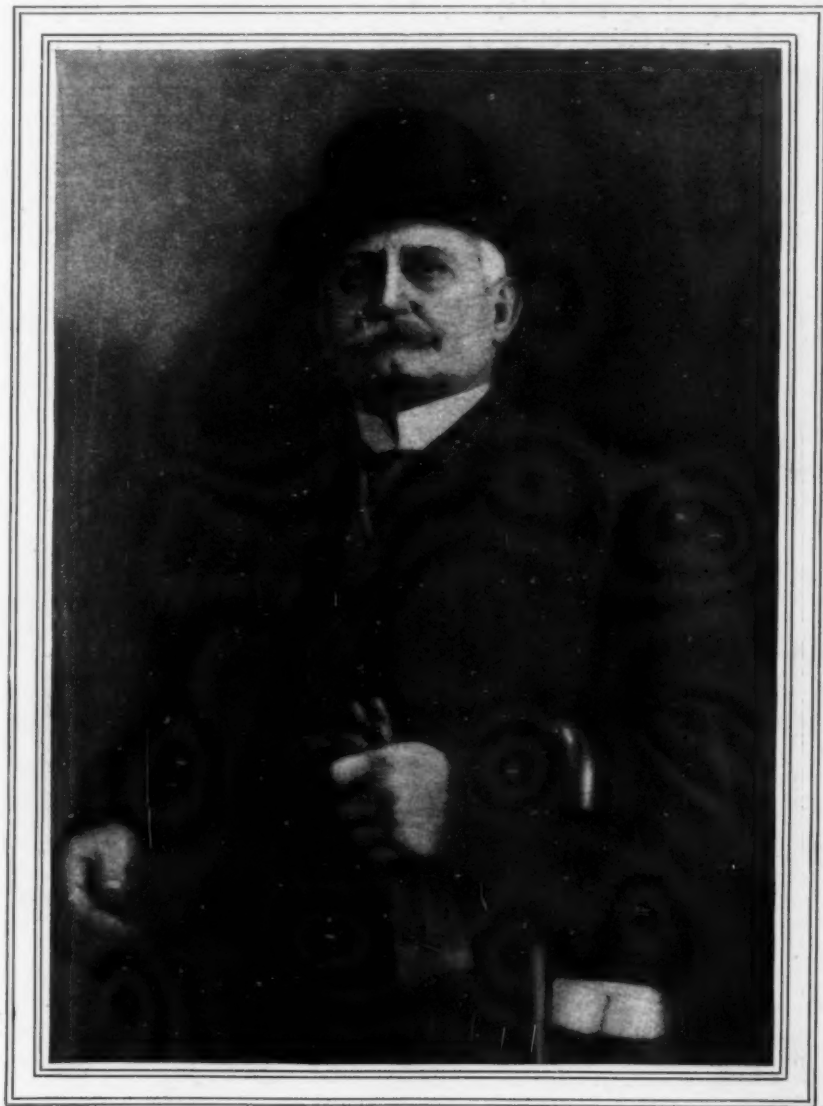
much labor and responsibility upon Mr. Gerard is that of caring for British interests in Germany, including the inspection of housing and food in the prison-camps. As was more or less the case with every other people in Europe, under

zealous to see that prisoners were properly cared for. Mr. Gerard was an American. He was looking out for the British. The Americans were selling ammunition to the British. There you are—a plain case of non-neutrality!

The munitions trade, an entirely proper traffic under international law, and long an important branch of German commerce, was the basis of much unpleasantness of all kinds. Our official observers with the German army were all withdrawn, as was also the military attaché of the embassy at Berlin. No reason for this move was ever publicly assigned, but the correspondents abroad

wrote that our officers were annoyed beyond endurance by references to "American shells killing the Germans."

The troubles of our ambassadors in the belligerent countries began with the beginning of hostilities, and it has been bitter hard work for all of them ever since. Thousands upon thousands of Americans, traveling for pleasure or for business, were caught in Europe by the sudden



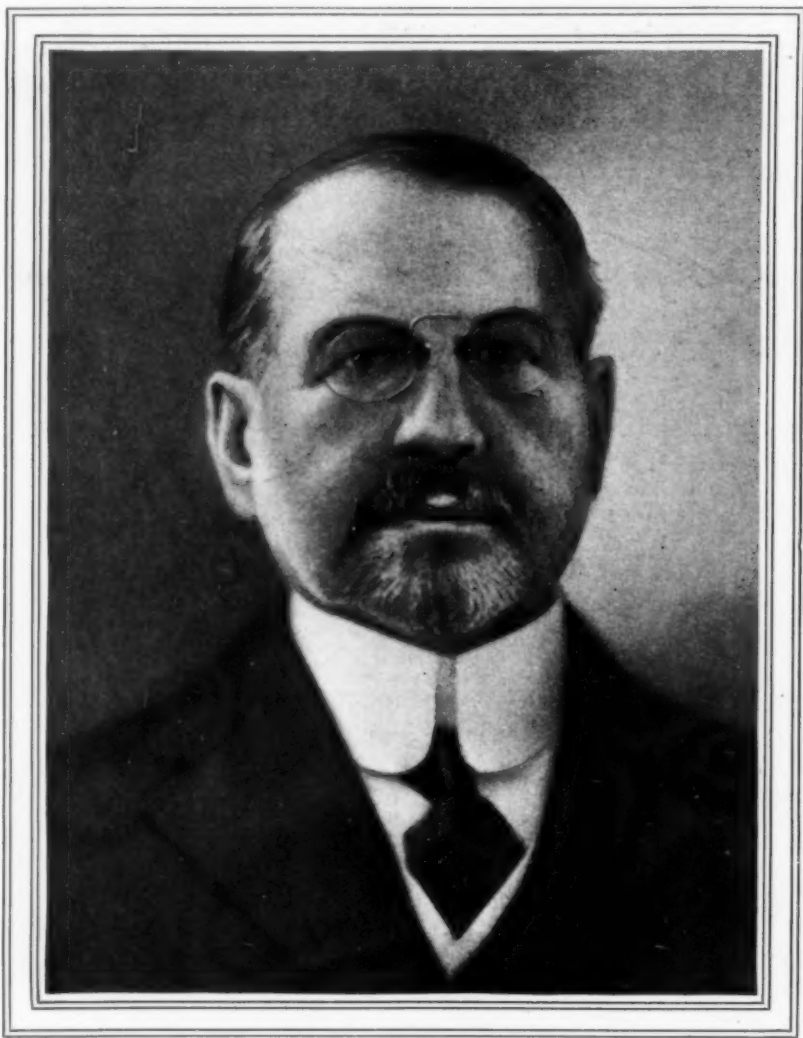
DAVID R. FRANCIS, OF MISSOURI, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO RUSSIA

outbreak of war. The machinery of international exchange having stopped, their checks or letters of credit were temporarily worthless. When the cash in their pockets was exhausted, most of them had no means of getting home, or even of securing food and shelter. It was up to the embassies to rescue them from their highly uncomfortable predicament.

Mr. Gerard in Berlin and Mr. Penfield in Vienna worked day and night, with all the embassy staff, assisted by volunteers,

to get the stranded ones out of danger and safely started on their homeward journey. They could not be responsible for them beyond the German frontier, and this condition immediately threw a double burden on Ambassador Herrick in Paris and Ambassador Page in London.

These two gentlemen had not only thousands of Americans in France and Great Britain to look out for, but also a host of refugees from the Teutonic empires, many of whom had had to en-



ABRAM I. ELKUS, OF NEW YORK, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY



THOMAS NELSON PAGE, OF VIRGINIA, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO ITALY

From a copyrighted photograph by Pach, New York

dure no small hardship in making their escape. Mr. Herrick had a particularly strenuous time of it. The shock of the general upheaval was less severely felt in England; but in France it was an instant death-grapple for the very life of the nation, and the convenience of foreign tourists was naturally a very secondary consideration.

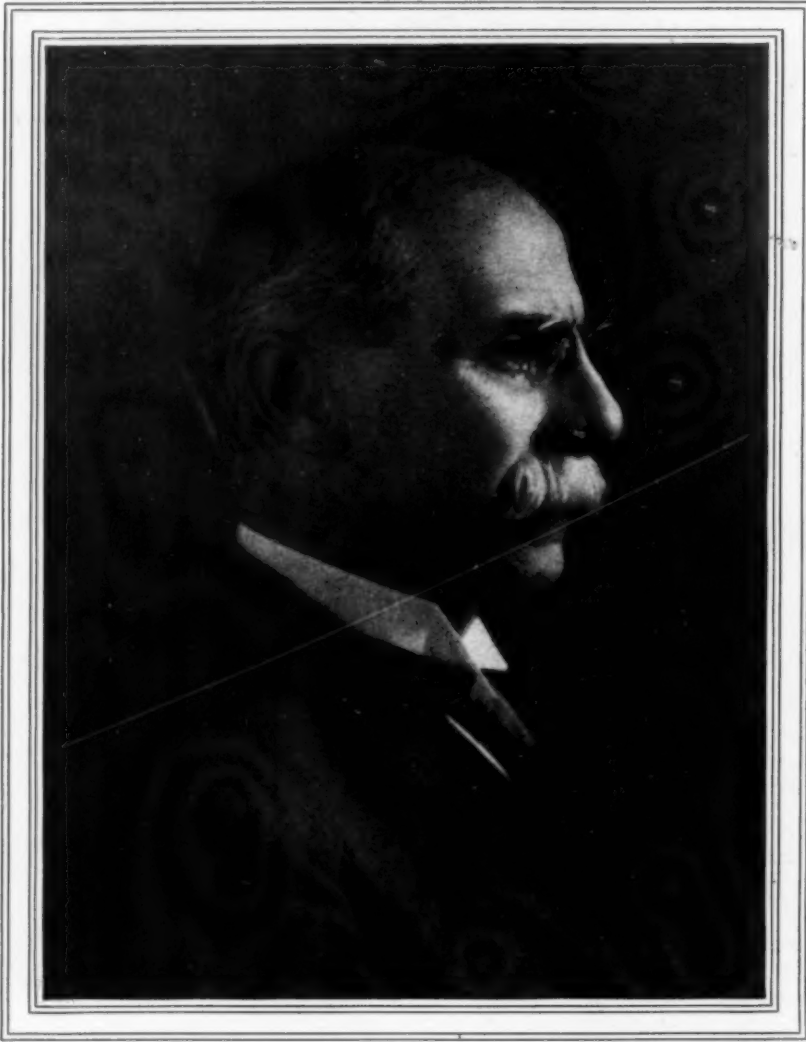
Ambassador Herrick's successor, William G. Sharp, appointed before the war,

arrived in Paris right in the middle of the excitement. With the modesty and good sense that have characterized all his official career, Mr. Sharp realized that it was no time for a green hand to project himself into the command. He did not present his credentials for several weeks, but quietly and tactfully gave Mr. Herrick all the aid he could.

Both Mr. Sharp and Mr. Gerard recently came home for a brief visit—their

first holiday since the outbreak of the war. An ambassador's usual allowance is two months' rest each summer, but last year these busy diplomats found that they could not leave their posts.

blunders. They must attend to the affairs of enemy countries in the capitals of enemies, but they must not espouse the cause of those whom they represent, or even appear to lean toward it. They



GEORGE W. GUTHRIE, OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

Mr. Gerard has absorbed much of the space in this article up to the present point, because his position has admittedly been the most difficult of all; but there are plenty of opportunities for other American diplomats to make disastrous

must at the same time be sympathetic and distinctly neutral—a pretty difficult assignment in itself.

As an example of formal public utterance under these circumstances, consider Mr. Sharp's remarks on being presented

to President Poincaré. They meet the occasion, and yet there is nothing in them that the Kaiser himself might not have said:

"During my sojourn among the French people I have come to have an added regard for their exemplification of brave and patriotic citizenship. In expressing the hope that out of the trials of the present hour may come the blessings of lasting and beneficent peace, I but voice the prayers of my countrymen."

Not a trace of dynamite in that! Perfectly friendly, and even affectionate, but not an unneutral syllable anywhere.

Walter Hines Page, at the court of St. James, has probably had as much work as any of the others, if not more, but he has also had more pleasant working conditions. He is among people with whom we have a common language, a common tradition, a common ideal. We have more misunderstandings and less misunderstanding where England is concerned than anywhere else. British interests and our own touch at countless points, for with no other power are our relations so close and so extensive. During the last hundred years we have had many questions to settle, but all have been settled peaceably, and the tradition of mutual understanding and respect has steadily grown stronger.

Mr. Page's duty of seeing that German prisoners are humanely treated has been made so light by the British government that there has not been an official complaint from Germany on this head since the war began. On the other hand, work of this sort has been the principal business of David R. Francis, our ambassador at Petrograd. Mr. Francis and his aids are doing all they can to help neutral and belligerent agencies to improve conditions in the prison-camps of Siberia, where there has undoubtedly been much room for improvement. A German in this country, who is devoting most of his time to the same purpose, recently spoke highly of Mr. Francis's energetic cooperation.

He told the writer that our ambassador had been able to "stir things up over there," and that his influence with the Russian government had been of the greatest service in the work of helping the German prisoners. He seemed to think that Mr. Francis, in popular parlance, had a way with him—a conclusion supported by the experience of an American diplomat in Belgium, who came to Brussels some years after Mr. Francis had toured Europe in the interest of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

According to this story, after the formalities were over, King Leopold, the aged ruler of the Belgians, leaned over with a reminiscent smile and lowered voice, and inquired:

"How's Dave?"

Thomas Nelson Page, our ambassador to Italy, had scarcely found his way to the embassy in Rome before he had to do some explaining. It will be recalled that in the weeks before Italy entered the war, the capital on the Tiber was a seething pot of intrigue. Prince von Bülow had been specially commissioned by the Kaiser to make a final effort to keep Germany's former ally from becoming her active enemy. The prince, a personage of power in Rome, played every card that he could use.

Among others, he started a report that there was an immediate chance for peace on American initiative backed by Italian influence. This attempt to use the alleged policy of the Washington government as a weapon against the war movement in Italy went so far that the Foreign Office at Rome had to issue a public statement to the effect that the whole idea was absurd. And then Ambassador Page had much trouble in disclaiming all knowledge of the reported plan for intervention.

An ambassador to any of the belligerent countries is almost sure to encounter such snares and obstacles from time to time. If he makes any mistakes, his troubles are likely to be too many for him within twenty-four hours.

After Death- What?



AS Spalding—superannuated, possibly, but jaunty still—trotted nimbly down the aisle between the rows of desks, glances of welcome, murmurs of surprise, greeted him. He had become a stranger; the office force had not seen him for fully two years. He nodded right and left, chuckled, as was his wont, and here and there stretched out a hand. Plainly he was glad to greet the Interstate Company once again, and that concern returned the compliment.

There were exceptions. Here and there a thirty-dollar-a-week man eyed the former manager with sour and savage glance. One of these turned to his neighbor.

"Cocky as ever, ain't he?" he queried.

His neighbor was a new man.

"Who is he?"

"A has-been so far as we're concerned—was fired months ago; but look at him! Red necktie—swell gray suit—gaiters! Boy, when do *we* get the chance at some real money? Look at Spalding! Retired—rich and retired. All he's got to do is to draw a check."

Quite unconscious of these remarks and of the envious glances bestowed upon him, Spalding, the former manager of the Interstate Company, entered the private office of Ephraim T. Ogilvie.

Ogilvie was a man of fifty—lean, healthy, well set up. His hair was grizzled, his mustache just turning gray. He was well dressed, but not so scrupulously neat as Spalding. He strode forward and held out his hand—a bit shamefacedly, perhaps. Spalding retreated before him. Ogilvie was worried.

"No hard feelings, Mr. Spalding?" he exclaimed.

Spalding vigorously shook his head.

"I just wanted to shut the door—I want to talk to you."

He closed the door, and came back and took a seat. Despite his red tie, his gaiters, his natty suit of clothes, all his cockiness forsook him. Of a sudden he seemed old—very old. He leaned forward on his cane and touched Ogilvie upon the arm.

"Eph," he began, "it's almost four o'clock. I left the house at eight o'clock this morning; and when I left I told Mrs. Spalding—I told Sally that I'd bring home forty dollars with me. I—I can't go home without it!" His lower lip trembled. "Eph," he cried, "honest to goodness, I haven't got a dollar in the world. I don't know what to do!"

Ogilvie, as if the other man had struck him, sprang from his seat and paced the floor.

"Good Lord!" he groaned.

Quite as suddenly he came back to his seat. He tossed a sheet of paper to his visitor.

"Mr. Spalding," he returned, "I don't have to ask you to believe me. I—I never lied to you in my life."

"I know you didn't, Eph," returned the elder man.

"My bank balance—there it is," said Ogilvie. "Look at it! It's less than ten dollars—see for yourself. Less than ten dollars at the present moment." He held up his hand at the other man's look of surprise. "Wait! I know what you're going to say—that I am getting twenty-five thousand a year. Don't I know it? And don't I know that I've overdrawn my salary account to the tune of five thousand? And don't I know that I don't own a dollar's worth of stock—not a bond or mortgage, not an inch of real estate? Look here!" He tossed another paper toward his visitor. "The premium on my life-insurance policy became due yesterday. I can't pay it—I daren't draw another cent from the office till the middle of next month. All that I've got between myself and starvation is my ability—and my life."

Spalding had been watching him—wondering. He knew that Ogilvie had told the truth. He wiped his forehead.

"Great guns, Eph!" said Spalding. "I thought all you had to do was to draw a check!"

He had unconsciously echoed the exact words of the supernumerary in the outer office; but in reality the phrase was his own—one with which the office had become familiar during Spalding's incumbency as manager.

"All you've got to do is to draw a check!"

"Mr. Spalding," went on Ogilvie, "if ever one man felt grateful to another, my gratitude is due to you. You—you brought me up in this plant; you taught me all I know. I know the business well, too. I couldn't help their putting me in your place."

The old man held up his hand.

"No offense—no offense, Eph," he protested. "It had to come—it was inevitable. And I'd rather it had been you than—well, Grierson, for instance. There was only one thing that hurt. They used to pay me fifteen thousand, and they jacked you up to twenty-five. Why didn't they pay me twenty-five?" he went on savagely. "If they had, I wouldn't have been bumming around now for a measly forty dollars!"

Ogilvie paced the floor again.

"Yes, you would, Mr. Spalding," he returned. "There's just the point. They pay me ten thousand more than they paid you—and I'm flat broke. What's the reason? Do we have to spend all we make? Does the Interstate ask me to cut a wide swath? Is there an implied suggestion that I ought to do it? Or do I merely want to do it? Or do I drift into it? What does it mean? Why, look here, Mr. Spalding," he went on, seating himself again and drawing his chair up close to the other man's. "When I was a boy, there were men who earned five thousand a year, year in and year out. Those men were considered rich. They lived on half their earnings and salted down the other half—and they died rich. Why can't we do it, Mr. Spalding? You, with ten thousand—fifteen thousand a year, for years; I, with twenty-five. What's the trouble, Mr. Spalding? That's what I want to know."

Spalding hopelessly shook his head.

"We belong to the new school, I suppose," he returned. "Live and let live—eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow—"

The younger man interrupted him. "Ah!" exclaimed Ogilvie. "That's what bothers me. When I'm dead—when my life and my ability no longer earn thousands of dollars—what's going to become of my family? If I left them a hundred thousand dollars—which I can't—they couldn't live on the income of it, at the rate we're going now. That's what bothers me. After death—what? That's

the question, Mr. Spalding; and it's got me going, too!"

Spalding had regained his spirits.

"Godfrey!" he exclaimed. "I thought I was pretty badly off, but—"

"We're all in the same boat," said Ogilvie. "Come, I'll drive you to your house; and you tell Mrs. Spalding just how the matter stands."

II

OGILVIE, an active man himself, possessed a family always busily engaged. His daughter, Irene, and his son, Tod, seemed to have inherited their father's restlessness. Like him, they had to do things all the time. Their mother had been dead for several years.

At the very moment when Ogilvie and Spalding stepped into the former's limousine, Irene was busily engaged. She was gambling—in the highly respectable and reputable way sanctioned by the present fashion—at her own bridge-whist in her own home.

Irene Ogilvie was a pretty girl just out of her teens. She was interesting. She had a quick, nervous, attractive way about her, a vivid smile, and fine teeth and eyes. Her great social ambition was to keep herself constantly interested.

To this end she avoided the fish, the crabs, the muckers. She rouged a bit, smoked a bit, and wore abbreviated frocks; but she did these things unconsciously, as it were—did them as a matter of course. The stare of a *roué* at her bare shoulder embarrassed her not a jot nor tittle; nor did the flush of clean-hearted youth at the same seductive sight cause her any thrill.

To her, styles and manners were quite a matter of course—as little worthy of remark as daily food. Had fashion dictated nun's garb for a change, she would have assumed it. If taking snuff had come into style, she would have sneezed with all the rest.

But these were not the interesting things. The mob lived to do these things; Irene lived for something else. Innocent-

ly, but eagerly, she sought the spice of life and found it—the unique in men and women. Not fish—not crabs. Spice—that was the point!

She had learned early what few New Yorkers know—that regularity and respectability do not afford the real entertainment—that there is but little of the dramatic to be found in a flock of sheep. Unconsciously, unerringly, she picked the crowd that pleased her—the irregulars, those tinged with a bit of mystery. Not the Bohemians—they are all alike. Some of her friends were rich, some poor, many of them prominent, some quite unknown; but all were gay, all were interesting.

The most interesting of them all was Blandy, soldier of fortune.

As his car turned into the long, straight stretch that led to his home, Ogilvie was thinking about Irene.

"After death—what?"

He couldn't shake it off. What would become of Irene? She might marry, but she hadn't married yet. What in the world would she do, if—

Tod, who was now in his junior year at Yale, could get along; he could surely earn some sort of a living for himself. Hard-pan was all right for Tod. But Irene—

Like a flash, a flying gray object speeded down the long stretch, swerved slightly, and crashed into the limousine. Ogilvie's car skidded against the curb, balanced for an instant on its two right-hand wheels, and then toppled heavily on its side.

Two blocks down the avenue the gray car shrieked as if in agony, as its driver furiously applied the brakes. Then it turned slowly and came back.

The chauffeur of the limousine had leaped at the psychological moment, had silenced his engine, and now was struggling with the side door of the overturned car. In the far corner a huddled heap lay silent. This heap was Ephraim T. Ogilvie.

The gray car crept back to the scene of the accident, like some culprit fearful

of the lash—a dog, its tail between its legs. The chauffeur of the limousine beckoned frantically. The driver of the gray car sprang to the ground. He removed his goggles. The chauffeur started.

"My great, Mr. Tod, it's you!" he cried.

"Good Lord, Andy!" returned the driver of the gray car. "I almost did for you! Are you hurt? It's my new car, and she bucks a bit. No bones—eh? What?"

The chauffeur pointed into the recesses of the limousine. Tod Ogilvie wasted no further words. He saw what had happened—he saw that hunched-up heap inside.

Tod got busy. He was a thorough-going Johnny-on-the-spot, this Tod Ogilvie. In his own way he was as efficient as his father; and motor-car accidents were in his line. He was worth three of Andy in an emergency. In the twinkling of an eye he had Ephraim T. Ogilvie out of the limousine, had him lying on the sidewalk, with a cushion underneath his head, and had him revived.

"Pop," he cried contritely, "it's me, Tod! It's my new car! I brought it all the way from New Haven just to show it to you, and see what I've done! Almost killed you—that's what I've done! How do you feel?"

Ephraim T. Ogilvie lifted his left arm—and dropped it. He groaned. The bone was broken. He placed his right hand upon his chest.

"Something there!" he moaned. "Oh, the pain!"

Tenderly they bundled him into the gray racer and took him home.

As they bore him through the wide hall, some of Irene Ogilvie's guests shrieked. Some of the women lit fresh cigarettes; some of them pushed card-tables out of the way. Others merely shivered and sought the dressing-room. The whist was broken up. The players stood not on the order of their going, but went at once.

Irene issued curt orders through the

telephone. Inside of half an hour Pliny, the operating surgeon at the Riverside, who had answered her call, tucked his stethoscope into his bag.

"His heart seems O. K.," he said. "I'll have to give him ether, I'm afraid."

"You'll have to," moaned Ephraim. "Oh, the pain!"

Twenty minutes later Pliny's assistant held a cone over the face of Ephraim T. Ogilvie. The patient, obeying instructions, drew a deep, deep breath.

He wondered vaguely if it was to be his last.

III

A YEAR after Ogilvie's death, Irene and Tod were confronted with a fact, appalling and inevitable.

Ogilvie had died penniless. Even his insurance policy had lapsed, for an obvious reason—he hadn't paid the premiums. All that they knew immediately upon his demise; and now they were confronted with a worse condition. They had exhausted the few thousand dollars generously given to them by the Interstate Company; they were well in debt, and their credit was about exhausted.

Over Tod Ogilvie hung the cloud—perpetual, with no silver lining—of responsibility for his father's death; upon him was the keen and bitter disappointment of his lopped-off university career. These things despoiled him of his former cheeriness, and rendered him desperate.

"Hang it all, Rene!" he complained to his sister. "I'm efficient in my line. I know it—you know it—everybody else knows it. There's not a man in New York that knows cars better than I do. Even Faurot asks my opinion on anything that's new; and yet I can't get a look in anywhere. What's an offer of a commission when everybody's selling cars? If I've picked up two hundred in six months, I've been doing well. What am I going to do?"

Tod was indefatigable in his search—he was restless—he wanted to be employed; and at the same time he wanted

easy money. From the "regular fellows" in the trade he descended to the pikers, the cheap-car men—and from thence to the made-over dealers.

It was Rookers, one of the latter, who sent for Tod one day.

"Mr. Ogilvie," he said, "I want you, as a judge, to take a squint at this made-over Reno. You know a car—take a look at this!"

Tod looked the Reno over.

"What did you say this is?" he queried.

"A Reno, of course."

"No, no," returned Tod. "You said it was a made-over car, didn't you?"

"Sure I did," returned Rookers.

Tod snorted.

"Nothing of the kind, Mr. Rookers! That's a new car. Nothing made over about that—perhaps it's had a coat of paint."

Rookers smiled.

"I was waiting for you to say it was a new car," he returned, rubbing his hands together. "I wanted your opinion, and you've given it. Well, let me tell you that that *is* a made-over car. It's not new—it's old. Your opinion clinches my idea that we've done the trick. We've taken an old car and made it over so that even you believe it's new. So far so good!"

He sidled up to Tod.

"Mr. Ogilvie, the car's a bargain. Do you want to buy it? You can make money on it, believe me."

"Buy?" echoed Tod. "I couldn't buy a tin lizzie. I'm flat broke!"

Rookers tapped him on the shoulder.

"Mr. Ogilvie," he went on, "will you—will you *sell* it, then—for me?"

Ogilvie shook his head.

"What is there in selling a made-over Reno?" he queried.

Rookers held up his hand.

"There is something in selling this particular Reno," he returned. "We have fooled you. You believed the car to be new. It is not new. Dealers will buy this car. You do not have to lie to them;

you do not have to represent it as a new car. All that you need do is to go to Boston—"

"Boston?" echoed Tod. "Why Boston?"

"Because," said Rookers, "in Boston there is a market. You take this car to Boston. You offer it for sale—to dealers, if you please. I can give you half a dozen names. You offer this nine-thousand-dollar Reno for twenty-five hundred dollars. Try it on!"

"And if I sell it?" queried Tod doubtfully.

Rookers pulled out a roll of bills and peeled off two or three.

"Expenses, anyway," he said; "and when you come back, we shall see. If you sell, you will have the money, and you can deduct a liberal commission. Try it on!"

Tod tried it on. He took the car to Boston, peddled it among certain dealers, and sold it that same day for twenty-seven hundred.

He came back to Rookers.

"You win!" he exclaimed. "What about seven hundred off that for my little commish?"

"Seven hundred is all right," said Rookers.

Tod took out seven hundred and handed over two thousand dollars in bills. From this latter sum Rookers peeled off three hundred and handed it to Tod.

"Yours," he said. "Don't rob yourself."

Tod stared at him.

"A thousand dollars," he exclaimed, "for selling a twenty-seven-hundred-dollar car! Where do you come in?"

"I come in," returned Rookers, "by getting a good salesman who knows his business. Suppose we try again!"

"Easy money!" echoed Tod. "Suppose we try again!"

He went home to the apartment where he lived with his sister. Necessity had kept them together.

"Rene," he exclaimed, "I made a thou to-day! Here's your half. Catch hold!"

Irene Ogilvie shook her head. Her face was flushed, her eyes unnaturally bright.

"I don't want your money, Tod," she answered a bit disdainfully. "I've made more than that to-day myself!"

"She produced a check.

"You did?" he cried. "From whom?"

"From Mrs. Orleans, the multimillion-aireess," laughed Irene gaily.

Tod pondered a moment over this intelligence. Then he shook his head.

"She's Blandy's friend," he said at length. "I don't like it. I don't like her and I don't like Blandy. I don't like your having anything to do with them!"

Irene's eyes glittered.

"Go on, Tod," she returned coldly.

"They don't like you; and they do like me. You are living your own life—let me live mine!"

"If father—" began Tod; but she cut him short.

"Father," she returned in even tones, "would have been here to-day but for an accident that happened to him."

She stopped. She had gone far enough. Tod flushed, strode to the window and looked out.

"Here comes Blandy now," he exclaimed angrily. "I'm going to beat it!" He looked her full in the face. "You'll keep the maid in while Blandy's here," he blurted out, "in case—"

The girl drew herself up.

"You don't seem to realize," she returned, "that I'm an Ogilvie!"

"And so am I," said Tod, looking at his roll of bills. "And yet I'm selling for the muckers. Easy money!" he repeated. "We're both getting it—just now; but how long is it going to last?"

As he went out, he brushed against Blandy, and gave him a surly greeting. Blandy laughed as he confronted Irene.

"Br-r-r-r!" he shivered. "I struck an iceberg in the hall."

Irene held out a welcoming hand.

"Let me warm you up a bit," she said.

"I've got tea with rum and red sugar, and everything you like."

Blandy followed her with his glance, wondering, wondering when the time would come—if it would ever come—when he could set foot over that mysterious and invisible line which Irene Ogilvie had drawn about herself. He was infatuated with her, mad about her, and she knew it; yet he had never dared to tell her so. Blandy was not a marrying man. Moreover, he was married; and Irene knew it. Her knowledge of that fact held him well in check.

But she liked him. Out of all that crowd of interesting idlers and celebrities she had picked Blandy, and he had picked her.

But she held him at arm's length—and quite successfully.

The rest of her crowd she took to her arms quite impersonally. She made frank love to the men she didn't care about; she held the women with her frank, innocent, good-natured friendliness. They liked her and stuck to her for the reason that she was the most interesting woman among them, just as Blandy was the most attractive of the men. Peniless as she was, Irene was able to hold her place.

"I've got to," she told herself. "It's the only thing in life. And I've got to gamble." She found herself repeating her brother's phrase. "Easy money! Why not—why not?"

"Suppose," said Blandy in his free and easy way, "we go to Claremont and have dinner?"

"The one best bet!" assented Irene.

While they rolled northward, Blandy touched her on the arm.

"I want to show you the very best thing about this car," he said.

He leaned forward. Attached to the upholstered partition were pockets, kits, flasks, cigar-holders.

"This," said Blandy, feeling for a little button hidden somewhere underneath the cushioned furnishing, "is something nobody knows anything about. 'There's not a car in the world but mine that has it. Look!'"

A little secret pocket slid into view, from which Blandy drew a piece of thick cardboard.

"The only car in the world that has it," he repeated. "The picture of a queen!"

He showed it to her. It was her own photograph. She snatched at it eagerly and angrily, but in a trice he had returned it to the pocket, and it disappeared.

"I'm entitled to it," he said, looking her full in the face. "It's safer there than anywhere else. Nobody knows about it but myself, and now you. And there it's going to stay, without your consent or with it, as you please!"

That night three cars were stolen from the Claremont garage the while their owners wined and dined within. One of them was a new and up-to-date Torrenza—a big blue machine worth eighty-five hundred dollars. It belonged to Blandy. He sent out an alarm as soon as he discovered the theft. New York was scoured, but the car completely disappeared.

IV

IN the next few weeks Tod sold another car for Rookers, and another, and another. Almost steadily, these days, he was out of town—in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington—then Pittsburgh—then Boston once again. Irene saw little of him, and he saw little of Irene; but she saw much of Blandy. Blandy saw to that.

One evening, late, Blandy called on her. Her maid was out, and she was alone—he had made sure of that. He was as cool and debonair as ever, and quite as gentlemanly; but he was clearly worried.

"I—I don't want to hurt you," he began, "and yet I don't know how to say this without offending you."

He drew forth a crumpled piece of paper, crushed it into her hand, and then turned his back upon her without another word.

Irene unfolded the paper and stared at it speechlessly. It was her own I. O. U. for seven hundred dollars.

"I—I gave this to Mrs. Orleans today," she stammered, rising. "How did you get it?"

He turned back to her.

"I met her in the nick of time," he said. "She was on the point of deserting you—breaking her friendship with you. She was on the point of breaking up all the friendships you have. She justified herself. You owed her seven hundred dollars, and she didn't see how you could ever pay her. I showed her."

He stopped. Irene's breath came quick and fast.

"I showed her," he repeated calmly.

"I paid the debt myself."

Irene caught at the back of a chair. Her face was livid with anger.

"You—you didn't dare!" she cried.

Blandy waited until the storm was over. Then he bowed gravely to Irene and took his hat and overcoat. He stepped to her side.

"My queen," he said gravely, slowly, "remember this—life is well worth living. You've got to live, you know!"

Within the next few months Irene realized this. She needed the life she was living, she needed her friends, and she needed easy money. Within the next few months Blandy had paid another gambling debt of hers, and had received her haughty thanks. Haughty or otherwise, her thanks were something. He had made a distinct advance.

V

Six months later Rookers slapped Tod Ogilvie on the shoulder.

"That dark-red car came in from the works this morning, Tod," he said. "I know a man in Trenton who wants to buy a car, and maybe he'll stand for this one. You can hold out for your price. It's a big, flashy-looking thing, and that's his style."

"I'll try my luck," said Tod.

"And oh, by the way, Tod," said Rookers carelessly, "steer clear of the main streets—just my advice. Of course, *I'm* all right, and *you're* all right, and this

car's all right; but the central office is raising thunder over these here stolen cars. They're suspectin' everybody. There's lots of crooks in this made-over business, and they're watchin' all of us. Careful—that's all. You understand!"

Tod looked Rookers in the eye. Tod understood. He had understood for some time now, but he had asked no questions. That wasn't his business. He had nothing to do with the history of a car. He was selling made-over cars—that's all—at fair prices.

Easy money! What were the odds?

He wheeled into the side street where he lived with his sister. It was after dark, of course. He wanted to tell her that he was off again for a two-days' trip. Half-way down the block he saw her come out of the apartment-house—with a man. He stopped his car, descended, and stole forward on foot.

The man was Blandy. Blandy and Irene entered a taxi and drove off. Tod heard their destination—Rector's.

There was something about Blandy's manner that Tod didn't like—something too familiar in the way he handed the girl down the steps of the house and into the cab. He knew men of Blandy's type; and he knew Irene—the luxurious, the self-willed, the impulsive—Irene, who always wanted something different—who clamored for excitement.

He followed them to Rector's. When they left, he was ready for them. The night air was keen. He wore a long coat, and the collar was turned up. His huge racing-goggles covered his face.

He solicited their trade. Blandy was about to refuse when the car and its size and general appearance caught his eye. He started, and glanced keenly at the closely muffled figure of the driver.

He helped Irene into the machine.

"The Crooked Crag Inn, New Rochelle," he said.

Tod threw in the clutch and tore across country with the speed of a projectile. It was a magnificent machine. The Trenton man was sure to get a bargain when he

bought it. But even the powerful car could not keep pace with Tod's thoughts, or with the swift vengeance that he planned.

At length he drew up at the hostelry—a low, gabled inn, well hidden from the road by shrubbery. Blandy and his sister entered its portals, side by side. Tod followed them. He had not yet been paid. He wondered at this, for he had expected Blandy to dismiss him at once.

Blandy ushered Irene into a cosy little waiting-room, where a fire was burning.

"My dear," he exclaimed quite audibly, "excuse me for just one moment, if you please."

As he withdrew Tod caught him by the arm—a bit roughly.

"Mr. Blandy," he choked, "I'd like to see you—outside—for a moment!"

"With pleasure, driver," returned Blandy, holding Tod's arm in his grasp. "I hope you didn't think that I'd forgotten you."

Tod drew him in front of the office window, where the light shone out to the veranda. He tore off his goggles, threw back his coat-collar, and stood bareheaded before Blandy.

"I don't think," said Tod, his anger rising, "that you'll soon forget *me*!"

Blandy started as if shot.

"Good Lord!" he cried. "*You*?"

"Ah," returned Tod, "you hardly expected to see me!"

"Right!" said Blandy. "I didn't think you'd got that far."

"Oh," returned Tod, "I'm no detective. I didn't intend to track you. It happened quite by accident, and by good luck, tonight—just in the nick of time!"

Blandy nodded.

"Just in the nick of time," he returned.

He caught Tod by the shoulders and marched him to the near-by car. He threw open the door, entered, and switched on the lights.

"Ogilvie," he said, "look here! There are some things that you fellows know about cars and some you don't. Now watch!"

Tod, his head and body thrust well within the car, looked on. Blandy pushed a hidden button, and a little pocket slid out into view. From it Blandy took a photograph and exhibited it to Tod.

Tod started back.

"Irene!" he cried.

There was deep silence for a moment. Finally Blandy nodded.

"Now, Ogilvie," he said, "you can take your choice. You can go back to New York safe and sound—and free; or you can go in and confront your sister, and have me telephone the bulls that I've rounded up the fellow who's selling stolen cars. It's up to you—not me!"

VI

PLINY, of the Riverside, watched carefully. Twice he applied his stethoscope. He snapped his fingers joyfully—a habit of his own.

"Just for an instant," he exclaimed, "I was the least bit anxious, but he's coming out of it all right!"

Ephraim T. Ogilvie began to come out of it. He gurgled, shrieked, struggled like mad. He called out wildly for Irene—Irene!

Then he opened his eyes and looked about him. He was a quick-witted man—he had a head on his shoulders.

"Doctor," he queried, "how long did it take?"

A nurse consulted her wrist-watch.

"About five minutes for the operation," she returned, "but you've been under the influence of ether for maybe half an hour."

Ephraim T. Ogilvie waved his good arm.

"I want everybody out of this room except my son and daughter!" he cried. "Sorry to be rude to you, doctor, but it's a matter of life and death. I want my

son and daughter. I want to talk to them alone!"

There was something in his voice that commanded obedience.

"Look here," he gasped, when the three of them were alone, "I've had a bad dream—a damnably bad dream. I've got to tell it to you now!"

They listened in frightened silence. His glance—his words—ate into them.

"We've got to cut down—we've got to retrench—while I'm still Ogilvie, and alive, instead of being Spalding, and dead, or practically dead. We've got to trim sail before—before you—"

Irene placed a cold hand upon his forehead.

"Agreed!" she cried. "We're game. Why didn't you say so before? I'll do my little bit."

Tod's face loomed up before his father's vision. Tod gulped; he had passed a bad hour or so since the accident.

"Look here, pop," he exclaimed, "it's a dead sure thing that I don't drive that gray devil any more! And I'm not built for a university." The young man rolled up his sleeves. "Take me down to the works," he added. "Let me start in at the bottom. As for the gray car, I know a chap in Boston who would give his eyes to get her—"

"Not in Boston!" said his father feebly. "That's where Rookers sold his cars—where you—"

There was a knock at the door. Irene answered it. A maid beckoned her into the hall.

"Mr. Blandy's down-stairs," she announced. "He'd like to speak to you for a moment."

Irene paled.

"Tell Mr. Blandy that I'm not at home!" she said.

TRIUMPH

THE race is won! As victor I am hailed
With deafening cheers from eager throats; and yet
More glad the victory, could I forget
The strained, white faces of the ones that failed.

Owen E. McGillicuddy

Young Blood*

A Story of Life Under the White Lights

by
Fred Jackson
Author of "A Full House," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

BUCKY ROLLINS, undergraduate at Elmhaven, is summoned to New York to hear the reading of his great-uncle's will. He takes with him six classmates—known to their friends as Reddy Wheeler, Simeon the Monk, Alonzo, Dicky Mason, Jimmy Barrister, and Gordon Prime. Arrived at the office of Gladwin & Kent, counsel to the late Chauncey Raymond Rollins, Bucky receives the wholly unexpected information that he has inherited property worth about five million dollars. This sudden good fortune—if it can be called good fortune, in view of the results—throws young Rollins entirely off his balance. Always a good-natured, irresponsible boy, he draws five thousand dollars from Mr. Gladwin, and plunges into a career of wild extravagance with his six companions. They hire a suite of rooms at the Mammoth Hotel, and outfit themselves regardless of cost. They pick up seven show-girls, and wine and dine them at gay resorts. Bucky's partner in these revelries is a blond beauty named Sylvia Nelson, and he becomes madly infatuated with her.

After five delirious days and nights, the seven undergraduates return to Elmhaven, to find that they have been expelled from the university. Four of them do penance and are reinstated. The other three—Bucky, Alonzo, and Reddy—go back to New York, where young Rollins takes a house for himself and his two friends, and settles down to a life of idleness and pleasure. He hires a yacht, leases a country place, and provides the money for a musical comedy, "The Girl in Yellow," in which Sylvia Nelson is to star. Miss Nancy Gladwin, who knew Bucky when both of them were children, invites him to her first dance, and he accepts, but in his preoccupation with Sylvia and her play he forgets to go.

Before production in New York, the show—of which Reddy Wheeler is business manager—is tried on the proverbial dog at Long Branch and other summer resorts. It is at Atlantic City when Mr. Gladwin sends Bucky the stunning information that his fortune has been swept away by an unlucky transaction in stocks.

CHAPTER XV

REDDY WHEELER'S OPPORTUNITY

IN a way, Bucky had been prepared for it, and yet the blow was a mighty hard one to bear. He read the words over several times, to make sure that he had made no mistake. Then he got Gladwin on the long-distance phone at his house; but the lawyer could tell him only the facts. Instead of going up, as he had anticipated, Amalgamated Steel had

gone down and down and down, to nowhere, and Bucky's money was lost.

His five millions had vanished as suddenly and unexpectedly as they had come, leaving him the worse off by a good deal, for he had two residences to keep up, a yacht, several cars, an army of servants, besides Sylvia's flat and servants, and the show.

He groaned at the thought of his predicament. He begged Gladwin to raise some money for him *somehow*—to do

* Copyright, 1916, by Fred Jackson—This story began in the October number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

something. Gladwin promised to try; and with that promise, indefinite as it was, Bucky had to be content.

He hung up the receiver, came out of the booth, mopping his brow, and sat down in a corner of the hotel lobby. The others were still at the theater, for the matinée was only half over. Alone, he faced the facts of the situation.

His town and country houses must go, of course. Gladwin would manage to get him out of the leases. The yacht would be returned to its owner. The servants could be dismissed. As for Sylvia, if the show would only "go over" in Boston, she would be taken care of. She could live comfortably on the generous salary she was now receiving; and Bucky's own interest in the production would be worth something substantial.

If the show would only go over!

But, first, it had to be moved to Boston, and he had no money to move it. He had barely enough to pay his hotel-bill and his own fare. He had let his cash on hand run down, and he was overdrawn at the banks.

He thought of Reddy Wheeler, and breathed a swift sigh of relief as he remembered that young man's business acumen and natural shrewdness. No one, thought Bucky, was better fitted to advise him in an emergency. So he rose hurriedly, went over to the theater, and entered the manager's office, where Reddy was always to be found.

He was there alone, going over some ledgers; but he closed them and pushed them aside politely as Bucky came in.

"Hello! Want anything?" asked Reddy, looking up.

"Yes," answered Bucky eagerly, closing the door behind him, and the other door that led into the box-office. "I want some advice. I'm in an awful mess!"

"What sort of mess?" asked Reddy curiously, swinging round in his chair, the better to see Bucky's face.

"About money," explained Bucky.

"Money?" repeated Reddy.

He stared. It was clear at a glance

that this was the last thing on earth he had expected to hear.

"The fact is," went on Bucky slowly, "I'm broke—*stone* broke. About the only thing I'll have left when my affairs are settled up is this show."

Reddy's jaw dropped.

"You're kidding me!" he ventured dubiously.

"No, I mean it."

"But I thought you had millions. Was that all gaff?"

"No, I had about five millions; but it seems that they were invested in Mexico. Three days ago I realized what I could, and went into Amalgamated Steel. To-day Amalgamated Steel went to smash."

"And you've *nothing* left?" asked Reddy in an awed voice.

"About enough to pay my board-bill. If Gladwin sells my steel stock for what it'll bring, there'll just be about enough to close my two houses and pay off the servants and so on."

"Well, I'll be darned!" gasped Reddy.

"So you see," went on Bucky, "I'm in a hole. I can't even move the show tomorrow."

"Can't you?"

Reddy pricked up his ears with new interest at that.

"Of course I can't. I told you I've just about enough to pay my board-bill."

"What are we going to do, then?" asked Reddy, drawing a deep breath and fixing his eyes on Bucky.

"That's what I came to ask you," admitted Bucky.

"Me? Why?"

"Because you've been studying the money end of the show business, and I thought you might be able to suggest something. Other shows must have been in tight places like this before."

"No end of them," agreed Reddy.

"Well, how did they get out?"

Reddy shrugged.

"On borrowed money, perhaps. Know any one you can borrow from?"

"I don't," answered Bucky grimly.

"And even if I did, I wouldn't borrow,

when I've no reason to believe I'd be able to pay back."

"Then," said Reddy thoughtfully, "you might be able to sell an interest in the show."

"To whom?" asked Bucky. "And for how much?"

Reddy grinned.

"I don't know. I haven't got a purchaser for you. I was just telling you how other people have got out of holes like this."

"But is there a chance on earth that we could find a purchaser in time?" asked Bucky. "We're billed to open in Boston on Monday, you know."

"We might go about to-night and brace some of the wealthy men here," suggested Reddy.

"Do you think there's much chance of raising money that way?" asked Bucky.

"To be quite frank with you, I don't," answered Reddy. "It's hard to find men on the outside who'll risk money on shows. It's too uncertain a game. Besides, this show isn't exactly a winner, you know. It isn't as if you had a big star with a name and reputation to bank on. Sylvia's good in the part, of course, and pretty, but nobody ever heard of her, outside of New York. Even in Boston she won't draw a dollar into the box-office."

"Well, it's too late to change all that now," said Bucky.

"Sure! I'm not saying you ought to change it. I'm only saying I don't think you'll get any one to put up money at this stage of the game."

"Then how'll we move the show?" asked Bucky helplessly.

Reddy reflected.

"Why not close it?" he asked.

"If there's any possible way to keep it going, I'll not close it," Bucky said grimly. "These people took a chance with me. They depended on me to stand by and see it through, and I hate to lie down. Besides, it's Sylvia's chance. I promised it to her, and I want to make good. If we close now, it'll look as if she'd failed. People would think she wasn't big enough

for the part, and she'd have to go back to the chorus. She'd never get another part!"

"You don't care about hanging on yourself, then?"

"I'd like to hang on," said Bucky, "but I'd rather drop out than close it."

"Would you sell out?"

"All my interest?"

"Yes," said Reddy.

"If I had to; but if I could sell out all of it, I could sell part, couldn't I? And get enough for present expenses? We might not need any more help after we open in Boston."

"The trouble is that this man I have in mind wouldn't buy a part interest. He'd want it all or nothing," said Reddy.

"You have some one in mind, then?"

"Yes."

"Who is he?" asked Bucky curiously, struck by something in Reddy's manner.

"Myself," answered Reddy.

"What?"

Reddy looked up.

"I mean it," he said. "I'll buy you out, if you'll sell the whole thing."

"You?" repeated Bucky, grinning. "Are you trying to string me? Don't I know well enough that you have no money?"

"I'll show you whether I have or not, if you'll talk business," said Reddy.

"But where did you get it? You didn't have any when we left Elmhaven," said Bucky bluntly.

"Never mind where I got it," said Reddy, smiling. "People don't ask you that, these days. So long as you've got it, they're satisfied."

"Oh, are they?" gasped Bucky, staring.

Reddy colored under his fixed scrutiny.

"I'll give you five thousand dollars in cash for the show," he offered.

"Five thousand!" cried Bucky. "Why, it's cost me fifty thousand, to date!"

"Don't I know what it's cost?" asked Reddy mildly.

"Better than I do, perhaps," acknowledged Bucky significantly.

Reddy's green eyes snapped.

"Just what do you mean by that?" he asked.

"What do you think I mean?" asked Bucky.

"If you mean that I haven't been rendering you straight accounts, you'd better not say it," answered Reddy. "Here are my books, and I've got vouchers to back them up."

"Tell me how you came by your money, then!" suggested Bucky.

"I made it—never mind how."

"You haven't worked at anything, except for me, and I didn't pay you a salary," said Bucky. "And you had no money of your own to speculate with."

"Well, the point is, I've got some money," said Reddy; "and I'll give you five thousand in cash for the show. Do you want it?"

"No. Lend me enough to move the show, instead."

"Lend it to you? When you said yourself you've no prospects of being able to pay back?"

"I'll pay you back."

"Not much! What money I have, I've got to hang on to. I don't intend to throw it around the way you've been doing with yours."

Bucky leaned forward. His jaw was set. His eyes blazed.

"You may be mighty glad I was such a fool with it!" he said.

Reddy shrugged.

"Soft pedal!" he said. "There are some men in the box-office. Anyhow, there's nothing to be gained by scrapping. Will you sell out for five thousand?"

"No, I'll be darned if I will!"

"The show 'll strand here, then."

"Let it strand!"

"And Sylvia will lose her chance."

Their eyes met.

"And the scenery and costumes wouldn't bring more than two thousand at auction."

"Have you enough money to go on with the show, after buying me out?" asked Bucky.

"Yes, I have."

"Yes, I guess you've feathered your nest well!" cried Bucky in disgust.

Reddy made no reply. Instead, he drew out a check-book and began writing a check.

"I'm selling on condition that you leave Sylvia in the principal part and star her if the show goes over in New York," said Bucky.

"I understand," agreed Reddy.

"And her salary isn't to be cut."

"Very well!"

He extended the check, and, as Bucky examined it, carefully wrote out a receipt. Bucky read it through and signed it with a flourish. At least, he told himself, he had safeguarded the company—and Sylvia.

Throwing down the pen, he strode from the little office, slamming the door behind him, and went in back to tell her what he had done. He wanted her, of all people on earth, to understand.

CHAPTER XVI

ROCK BOTTOM

THE performance was nearly over, so Bucky went into Sylvia's dressing-room to wait. It was a pleasant place, gay with chints and flowers and furnished with white, wicker things that were carried along with the show. In one corner was a little tea-wagon; in another corner was a full-length mirror. Few stars have found themselves so comfortably surrounded when on the road.

Bucky threw himself into one of the big chairs and picked up an illustrated magazine, but he did not read. He did not even try to read. He had too much to think of—too much that was much more important than anything he might chance to find in print.

To begin with, he had plans to make for his own future.

Until now, the subject had never bothered him greatly. As an undergraduate, he had thought of various professions in a casual sort of way, but had never felt

himself especially fitted for any particular one. He had realized that sooner or later he would probably graduate, and that then he must make a choice; but feeling drawn to no definite trade or life-work, he had put off thinking about it.

Then had come his great-uncle's money, and he had drifted into a life of spending and pleasure-seeking. Without pondering the matter at all, he had accepted Reddy's assurance that the first duty of the rich is to keep their money in circulation.

Now, however, he told himself, he must get down to earth and start in at something; for he was almost twenty-three. But what was there that he could start in at?

He recalled the various callings selected by other fellows he had known at college. Doctors, lawyers, engineers—he dismissed those three at once, as he hadn't the necessary training, and didn't fancy going back to school again, now that he'd had a taste of real living. Writers, teachers, actors, painters, sculptors, musicians—no, he knew quite well that he hadn't any special talent to develop. Business men, then? He hadn't a head for business, either. Well, what *had* he that he could turn to account?

It was a difficult problem.

Was he of an inventive turn of mind? No.

Would he fit into the diplomatic service? Or could he make a statesman? Hardly.

Well, just what *had* he? Just what *could* he do? Bucky began to analyze himself, for the first time in his life. He tapped off with his fingers, on the arm of the big wicker chair, his various abilities and accomplishments.

He had a pleasing barytone voice, untrained. He could dance very well indeed. He could drive a car. He could order a dinner. He understood the art of dressing. He could blow smoke-rings. He could carry a good deal of liquor without getting drunk. He could mix excellent cocktails. He could make himself popular with men or women, because he had a magnetic personality. He could shave him-

self without looking butchered. He could write a legible hand. He could sleep through any racket. He could play a fair game of lawn-tennis, build an excellent bonfire, and drink from a bottle without spilling the contents.

That was about all.

He had taken the general course at Elmhaven. He had studied sometimes, had shirked when he could, had "crammed" before examinations, and would have graduated—if he had remained at college—with absolutely no salable or serviceable knowledge.

He had what was commonly known as a good general education—and no preparation for earning money. He was capable of being a rich idler, and nothing else under the sun.

But a rich idler was now the one thing he could not be!

What, then?

The problem disturbed him. He could not find the answer to it. Fumbling for his cigarette-case—a very large one, fashioned of gold, and set with precious stones—he selected a cigarette, lighted it, and began to blow smoke-rings upward, watching them meditatively with narrowed eyes as they spread and finally broke.

He had been too deeply absorbed to notice how long he had been waiting, so it did not enter his head that some one else might carry the news to Sylvia first. But the instant she opened the door and came in, he knew that she knew.

It had been her pretty custom to come straight to him, when they were alone—to curl up on his knee and relax in his arms. Then she would rest her golden head against his shoulder, and tell him how tired she was, and that she wanted to be petted, please. But to-day she did not trouble to wheedle him with any of her pretty tricks. The play was over. The final curtain had fallen.

Leaning back against the door through which she had just come, she faced him searchingly, and cried anxiously:

"Bucky! Tell me quickly! Is it true?"

"You've heard?" he asked, though he knew the answer.

"Reddy says you've lost your money—that he's bought the show!"

Bucky nodded. She came slowly forward and dropped upon the edge of the wicker couch that he had insisted upon carrying with the show, so that she could rest on *matinée* days.

"Well, it's just my rotten luck!" she cried grimly, her face white, her blue eyes glittering, her bosom heaving. "Every time I think things are going right, something turns up to spoil it all! Why in Heaven's name couldn't you be satisfied? You had money, hadn't you? Why did you have to butt into Wall Street? You might have known you didn't have a chance on earth. You might have known they'd fleece you. Why, they live on little boobs like you, those guys down there! I could have told you, if you'd come to me!"

He sat rigid, speechless with horror and amazement. Here was a Sylvia he had never seen before. This white-faced, fiery-eyed fury was a stranger to him. He could not believe his own eyes and ears.

"Did you think you could put anything over on them?" she went on, clutching the silken pillows at either side of her in her clenched hands. "Why, they've been laying for you since you first blew into town. They've had their eyes on you all along; but I thought you were so tied up they couldn't get to you. Who told you to take your money out of those Mexican things? Who put you up to it? Can't you *talk*?"

He found his tongue as she raised her voice shrilly.

"Please, not so loud!" he begged, uncomfortably glancing toward the thin partitions.

"Was it Reddy?" she demanded grimly.

"No—my own solicitor, Gladwin."

"Gladwin! Oh, that's good! So they reached *him*!"

"What do you mean by that?" asked Bucky hotly.

"For goodness' sake, wake up! Cut

your wisdom-teeth!" she snapped. "I mean that they made it worth his while to give you the steer, of course. I mean that when your money changed hands, a lot of it went into Mr. Gladwin's pockets, you may be sure!"

He rose angrily.

"You don't know what you're saying," he said, "and I can't let you go on. Gladwin's my friend. He's been a friend of my family for years. He's known me since I was a kid."

"Of course!" she cried sarcastically. "And he has a father's affection for you—I can see that. Otherwise he would have let your money stay where it was—invested so that no one could get it away from you."

He was struck by her apparent knowledge of his affairs.

"How do you know how my money was invested?" he asked.

She looked at him commiseratingly.

"What do you think I am—a half-witted imbecile?" she asked. "Do you think I hung on for three years only to fall for the first four-flusher that flashed a roll of bills on me? Why, you poor dub, three days after I met you I knew all about you that there was to know. I waited three years for a fellow like you; and I passed up some pretty promising propositions, too!"

He began to feel rather sick as the truth dawned upon him. He gazed at her wistfully, helplessly, fearfully, as his illusions began to go.

"You mean—you were not fond of me at all?" he asked slowly.

"Oh, you're all right. I liked you well enough. You were a pretty decent skate!"

Something in his attitude reached the tiny fragment of real womanhood left in her. She felt a little sorry for him, as he stood there in the ruins of his beautiful air-castles.

"But you just played me for a sucker," he said, bent upon knowing the truth.

"You didn't really care for me. Any one young and—green, who'd have turned up with the money, could have had you?"

"Sure!" she said calmly, almost defiantly. "Why not? I had to look out for myself, didn't I? I was just about as far as I could get on my own. I could either stay in the chorus until I got too old to kick up my legs, or I could marry a chorus-man or a plumber or a grocer, and settle down in a cheap flat to raise ten kids. Rich men used to marry show-girls, but they don't any more. They just amuse themselves with them nowadays, and then blow. It's up to us to make hay while the sun shines, or go without hay at all. It's all very well for folks to talk when they've always had things handed to them; but wait till you have to go out and fight like the devil for everything that you want, and see if your ideas don't change some. I had nothing to trade for what I wanted out of life but just myself, and I waited three years for my price. Then I had to go and fall for *you*!"

He wasn't looking at her when she finished. Somehow, he had no desire to look at her now. She was like some hideous caricature of his Sylvia—the girl he had thought her to be.

He saw her point of view, of course. He realized that it must be hard for girls of her sort, thrown out into the world to shift for themselves, and equipped with nothing but pretty faces and soft bodies as weapons for the fray. But he had thought her fresh and sweet and womanly, brave in the struggle for existence, frank and sincere; and she was none of these things. She was only hideously practical and cold and hard.

He was sorry for her, but he wanted to get away from her quickly and never see her again or think of her. This revelation of her selfishness had wrenched his first fierce love out of his heart, as a young shrub is uprooted, carrying the earth with it and leaving a gaping hole. Within him, somewhere, there was just such a void, and it ached.

"I'm sorry things have turned out this way," he said. "But I've sold the show to Reddy on condition that you are to star if it goes over in New York, and

your salary isn't to be cut. So you will be all right, you see."

She shrugged and snorted disgustedly.

"Oh, yes—I shall be all right," she agreed. "Only—he isn't the easy mark you were, not by a long shot. I've been watching him for some time. What I get out of him I shall pay for, one way or another. It's not going to be the same at all—don't you fool yourself for a minute!"

"But—but you'll get your chance," said Bucky.

"Yes, I'll get my chance—on certain terms. I've had a talk with him, and I know—the dirty little rat!"

She clenched her white teeth in her lip.

Bucky moved to the door, and with his hand on the knob looked back.

"Good-by," he said, "and good luck!"

She was curled up among the silken cushions of the couch. The cushions were pink. Her court gown was white and gold. She made a very effective picture, all soft and fresh and lovely to see.

"Good-by," she responded carelessly.

He passed out, leaving her sitting there.

Various members of the company stared at Bucky curiously as he crossed the dark and empty stage and passed out of the theater. His mouth was dry. His eyes burned in the glare of the board-walk. He felt weak and nauseated.

Rejecting the offers of the waiting taxi-drivers and chair-men, he walked slowly back to the hotel and paid his bill. As he was packing, Alonzo came up to offer his sympathy. He had seen Reddy, and had heard the news. Furthermore, he had received notice that his presence with the show was no longer desired, that the management would no longer be responsible for his bills, and that in future all hangers-on and followers would be barred from the theater.

So Alonzo was thinking of going back to South America, for a time at least; but he had no intention of leaving quite yet. He wanted one last supper with the Titian-haired Marguerite before he went.

Accordingly, he was able to go with Bucky only as far as the train.

As they left the hotel, they passed Sylvia and Reddy coming in together, apparently on excellent terms.

CHAPTER XVII

ON HIS OWN

BUCKY drove to his town house, took a hot bath and a hot drink, and went to bed. His valet attended him, switching out the lights, tucking in the covers, and opening the windows ere he departed. Bucky chuckled grimly at the thought of his luxurious state. Practically a pauper—so he considered himself, now—he was housed for the night in a fashion that kings might well envy.

He felt very much alone, very badly used, very bitter. The instant his money was gone, his companions in pleasure had abandoned him, each to seek his or her own fortune in his or her own way, nobody bothering about the fate of the poor fool who had generously provided for them. Like a pebble in a pond, he had dropped out of their lives, leaving no trace.

If only Reddy had said:

"Here, take my money and get on your feet again!"

Or if Alonzo had said:

"I'll go back with you, and we'll see what we can do."

Sylvia, too, might have wept a few tears, even if they were false ones. If any one of Bucky's friends had shown the slightest inclination to stand by him, his misfortune would not have seemed so great; but it was very hard to be left so entirely alone.

He felt the tears smarting on his eyelids. He was ashamed of such unmanly weakness, even in the darkness; so, tossing hotly in his bed, he determined that he would show them of what stuff he was made—that he would somehow, in some fashion, get out and hustle and make another fortune for himself, by his own efforts, unaided.

Reveling in the thought of future achievements, he finally fell asleep.

It is the faculty of youth to build new dream-castles upon the smoking ruins of the old.

Bucky had ignored and forgotten Sylvia's assertion that Gladwin had intentionally misled him in regard to his financial affairs, and had benefited thereby, but the Sunday morning newspapers corroborated her. The whole story of the Wall Street battle was there, with a fairly plain insinuation that Gladwin and certain other men had helped to engineer the whole thing.

Bucky writhed under the thought that that kindly old gentleman, too, had proved false to him—that friend of his uncle's who had spoken so affectionately of his mother. It seemed as if the world were a rotten place, and most of the people in it treacherous and vile. He could hardly wait until Monday to go down and tell the lawyer what he thought of him.

Well, the others might all be traitors and self-seekers, but Bucky, if he had to fall, would at least fall like a gentleman. He would stoop to nothing dishonorable. After all, his faults and follies were the faults and follies of hot-blooded, hot-headed youth. There was nothing mean or false in him.

He breakfasted in state, and read the "help wanted" advertisements, to see just what sort of labor was in demand. He walked up the avenue and pondered. He watched the crowds, and wondered how the men in cars and taxis had made their money. He took a solitary lunch, and smoked and thought some more. He walked again in the afternoon, and dined again alone.

But if there was some particular niche into which he was destined to fit—if there was some work on earth for which he was especially suited—he could not discover it.

In the evening he went to a vaudeville show, because he was unbearably lonely and bored; but he could not escape from his problems even there. He kept think-

ing around in a circle. He kept wondering how other people made money, and how he could do likewise.

If only there had been some one to talk it over with, it would not have been so bad; but there was no one. He was unbearably lonely. The crowds on every hand only intensified his feeling of aloofness. Every one else in the world seemed to have friends except himself.

Before the thunderbolt fell he had been like the gay throng all about him. He had come into theaters, surrounded by beautiful, laughing girls and long-limbed, clean-looking, well-groomed men. He had come in state, just after the curtain had risen, perhaps—descending from a limousine at the door, ushered through the dimness in pleasant expectancy to his box, or to his orchestra-seats well to the front. There had been Sylvia to seize his arm with adorable intimacy and call his attention to this or that, Alonzo or Reddy to whisper some comment.

Reddy—and Sylvia!

He burned at the thought of them. Yes, Reddy and Sylvia and Gladwin—all had betrayed him; and Alonzo had politely but speedily excused himself, like a rat fleeing from a sinking ship!

Bucky told himself that he was glad he had lost his money. He told himself that now, if he made friends, they would be real friends, who would stick through thick and thin. At least he had rid himself of the fair-weather variety.

He walked home, because he had already begun to think of economizing, and though it would have been pleasant to whirl through the park for a bit of air, he denied himself such a luxury.

For the first time, the house seemed big and gloomy, for Bucky entered it alone, and there weren't half a dozen other fellows lounging about, smoking his cigars and cigarettes and drinking his drinks.

He tried to read, but couldn't, and so presently went to bed, to toss and toss and wonder anew what fate held next in store for him.

Monday morning found him in Gladwin's office. Formerly, his appearance had been a signal for the opening of the door marked "private"—the door which led into Gladwin's inner sanctum. But to-day he had to be announced, first, and was left cooling his heels in the outer room for fifteen minutes before the lawyer was finally free to see him.

He strode into the private office in a rage.

"Good morning, William," said Gladwin genially, looking up from the writing with which he was engaged.

Bucky halted with the desk between them and grimly regarded the older man.

"It's a *very* good morning for you, no doubt," he said.

"For me?" returned Gladwin, raising his eyebrows quizzically. "I don't think I quite follow."

"Quite a neat little fortune you must have made through certain recent transactions," went on Bucky. "I congratulate you upon your cleverness. It must be a source of great satisfaction to you to remember how you imposed upon my confidence in you, and turned my foolish ignorance to account!"

Gladwin had the grace to redden.

"But if you think you're going to get away with a raw deal like that, you've got another guess coming," went on Bucky more angrily. "Either you'll return me the money you tricked me out of, or I'll get a good lawyer and see what he can get out of you!"

Gladwin looked apoplectic.

"*William!*" he cried, leaning forward and gripping the arms of his chair. "I must ask you to be careful what you say! Your insinuations are both absurd and most unjust. I have nothing to fear from the most rigid inquiry into what I have done."

"Haven't you? Then you were careful enough to take advantage of some sort of legal trickery, were you?"

"As your agent," answered Gladwin calmly, "I merely acted for you. When you ordered me to take your money out

of Mexican securities and put it into Amalgamated Steel, I did so. I have your written order directing the move."

"But I knew nothing whatever about such things!" cried Bucky, who already saw that he was helpless.

"That isn't my fault, is it? If you'd spent the time that you wasted so foolishly in learning how to take care of your fortune, perhaps you wouldn't have lost it."

"But I paid you to take care of it. You advised the move I made."

"I put the facts before you and gave you your own choice, and you chose," Gladwin returned imperturbably. "If you intend to bring any charges against me, I advise you to have them substantiated, or you'll merely be wasting your time, for nobody will believe you. You would be foolish to try to fight me, William."

"Yes," said Bucky bitterly, "I dare say you're right."

"And now," went on Gladwin, as genially as ever, "I have here a check for a thousand dollars. It is all that remains from the sale of your stock and the settlement of your affairs. You will be released from all legal claims regarding both your residences and the yacht, and the servants will be paid off to-day. I am sorry there isn't more left over, but that can't be helped."

Bucky took the check and looked at it.

"A thousand dollars!" he said grimly.

Added to the five thousand he had received from Reddy, that made six. Six thousand dollars from five millions!

"Will you sign this receipt in full, please?" asked Gladwin.

Bucky grinned. It was useless to be angry.

"Certainly," he said, and signed.

He had no doubt that legally everything was all right. He was beginning to realize that Gladwin was not the sort of man to make mistakes.

"Thank you," said Gladwin, as he examined the signature and nodded his satisfaction. "That, I think, completes our business relations, William. However, if ever I can serve you—for friendship's

sake—in the way of counsel and advice, or perhaps a small loan, you have only to call upon me."

Bucky rose.

"Thanks," he said, with another grin.

"You are very good; but you can hardly wonder that I'm rather shy of your counsel now. As for your loan"—he reddened—"before I come to that, I'll dig sewers!"

He turned and strode toward the door.

"Good-by, William, and good luck!" called Gladwin, still amiably. They were the very words Bucky had used to Sylvia.

Bucky went out and slammed the door without answering. The clerks and stenographers in the outer office stared after him wonderingly.

In the private office, Gladwin sighed over the poor boy's youth and inexperience, and swiftly dismissed him and all his affairs from mind. He was a very busy man.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BOTTOM OF THE LADDER

BUCKY's first act upon leaving Gladwin's office was to bank his capital—Reddy's check for five thousand and Gladwin's check for one thousand. This done, he went up-town, took his clothes and a few books and personal belongings out of the big house that had formerly been his, and moved into a single room and bath in one of the thousands of small, insignificant side-street hotels, down-town.

He was bent upon the strictest economy, for after the sums he had squandered since his departure from college, six thousand dollars looked like nothing at all. Moreover, he wanted to use as little of it as possible for living expenses, saving the greater portion to use as the foundation for a new fortune.

He was vaguely aware—having read it or heard it—that nowadays one can do nothing without capital. His six thousand must be his capital; and with it, in some way, he must win his way to the front again. He was determined upon

that. He had carried away from Gladwin's office the conviction that he had played the fool, and that the only way to reinstate himself in his own good graces and self-respect was to jump in and *win*.

It's a sad moment in any one's life when realization comes that one has played the fool. The older one is when the moment of awakening comes, the sadder. Bucky writhed under the scorching light that his own self-analysis cast upon him; but he was young enough to endure the death-throes of his vanity and self-conceit.

He came forth from the fire of self-disgust eager to have a new bout with the world, and to show his mettle.

He bought all the afternoon newspapers and studied them in search of some business opportunity—some legitimate and profitable scheme to which his six thousand dollars would buy him admittance; but he found none. True, there was an up-town grocer looking for a partner. There were opportunities, or alleged opportunities, in real estate. There was a farm for sale. There was a garage for rent; but none of these things appealed to Bucky.

He wanted something larger—something more promising. So he inserted an advertisement in the newspapers of the following day, which announced:

Man with five thousand dollars to invest in good, legitimate business promising big returns invites offers. Give complete details by mail. X. Y. Z., New York.

Needless to say, he was submerged under an avalanche of replies. He spent the afternoon and evening going through them, and casting most of them into the waste-paper basket! Half of the pile came from real-estate agents, offering suburban lots which were sure to treble in value within a year. Some came from brokers, offering mining stocks. Some came from mysterious individuals who had wonderful opportunities or schemes, but could not entrust details to the mail. A few came from men willing to take in a partner in a saloon or store. One came from an inventor who required just five thousand

dollars to complete and patent his model. And one came from a camera-man, who declared that he could show X. Y. Z. how to turn five thousand dollars into twenty thousand within six weeks.

Of all the letters, this one interested Bucky most. It was written by hand, on hotel stationery, and seemed sincere. Moreover, Bucky had heard—as who has not?—of the enormous fortunes made overnight in motion-pictures.

He began to figure. If five thousand could be turned into twenty thousand within six weeks, twenty thousand could be turned into eighty thousand within six weeks more, or twelve weeks in all. Eighty thousand would become three hundred and twenty thousand within eighteen weeks. At that rate, he would have his fortune back in next to no time; but could a thing so marvelous be true? Wouldn't everybody with money be doing it, if it really could be done?

Though he had done some very foolish things, Bucky was not an utter fool; but he was young and optimistic and extremely hopeful. It occurred to him that since there was no other reply that interested him at all, he would not lose anything by interviewing this camera-man, one Thomas Dillon by name. Bucky need not commit himself. It would do no harm to have a talk with the fellow and listen to his proposition. At least, it would pass a dull evening.

Accordingly, Bucky got his hat and walked around to the hotel from which his correspondent had written. It was six or seven blocks away, on one of the side streets branching off from Broadway.

He asked for Thomas Dillon at the desk, and delivered a card to the bell-boy. On it he wrote:

In regard to X. Y. Z.'s advertisement.

Then he sat down in the dingy marble foyer, to wait; but his waiting was not prolonged unnecessarily. Indeed, Mr. Dillon appeared so swiftly that the bell-boy wondered what magic formula Bucky had penned.

He proved to be a tall, angular person in clothes somewhat large for him. His nose was long, his teeth were prominent, his skin was sallow, and he had brown hair. Superficially, he was no beauty, and yet he had a pair of bright, steady, confident, brown eyes that were impressive. He had a certain magnetism. One felt instinctively that he was aboveboard and on the level.

"You wanted to see me about the letter I wrote in answer to your advertisement?" he asked, halting before Bucky inquisitively and looking down.

"Yes," said Bucky.

"Well, here I am," said Thomas Dillon, seating himself on the padded leather davenport, and stretching out his legs. He took off his hat and produced a cigar from an inner pocket. "Smoke?" he asked.

"No, thanks," said Bucky.

Thomas Dillon bit off the end and struck a match.

"Interested in the movies?" he asked.

"In a way," answered Bucky. "Everybody is, more or less."

"I guess that's right," admitted Dillon, puffing.

"But what I'm interested in more than anything else, just now, is making money. I don't care whether I make it out of movies, or how I make it—that is, in some honest way," explained Bucky.

"I see," said Dillon. "Well, I told you in my letter just what I can do; and if that sounds good to you, I'll tell you how I can do it. There's no use going into it if you're not interested; but if you are, why, I don't mind outlining the whole scheme to you."

"That's just what I hoped you'd do," Bucky assured him.

"Good! Here goes, then!" Dillon twisted the cigar to one side of his mouth and half turned in his seat. "What people want to see nowadays," he said, "is features—good features, well done. They've had about every kind of thrill you can give them. They've had all kinds of comedy falls and slap-stick stuff. What

they want now is a good, strong story with a punch, laid in pretty sets; at least, that's how I figure it out."

"I dare say you're right, so far," agreed Bucky.

"I know I'm right," said Dillon. "The demand for good features is so big that the producing concerns are not only working their own stars to the limit, but are buying films outside whenever they can get hold of them. It used to be that an outside producer hadn't a chance on earth to get rid of his film, but nowadays he can practically pick his market. Do you follow me?"

"Yes," said Bucky.

"Now," went on Dillon, "this is the time of year to make pictures. In the Adirondacks, for instance, you can get thirty scenes a day in weather like this, and not work your people to death, either. I mean, of course, if you have experienced actors. You don't need a studio at all—just stick up your interior sets on a platform, and shoot. For exteriors, you can stand in one spot and get eight different locations just by turning the camera four inches for each one. And you don't have to pay for locations, either. They're free, and as pretty as any scenes you've ever seen on the screen."

He took a long puff on his cigar.

"Now," he went on, "this is what I'm coming to. Get a good script for a few hundred dollars, or whatever a good one costs. Get some experienced actors—they're cheap now, because it's summer, and shows are closed. Go up into the Adirondacks and make a feature. You can do it easily for five thousand dollars, and if you can't sell it for twenty thousand when you bring it in, I ought to be in Matteawan."

"You mean, make a feature film on speculation—is that it?" asked Bucky.

"That's it," answered Dillon.

"And you can sell it, when it's made, for four times what it cost?"

"Well," said Dillon, "you can sell a five-reeler or six-reeler for twenty thousand without any trouble. But the idea

is not to let any one know that it only cost five. You see, most of the big concerns pay more for features, because they can't systematize the business. They spend fifteen or twenty thousand on a film that could be done for five. The extra money goes in wasted time, while the salaries go on just the same—in bad management—in bad buying of supplies—in unsuitable outdoor conditions—in a hundred and one ways I needn't go into here. You and I, with one company working, no studio expenses, no artificial lights, no mob of extras, and no big salaries, can easily get out on five thousand. In the Adirondacks, especially in summer, it's a cinch to get extra people. They're glad to work in a picture just for the fun of it. You can do a garden-party or a ball up there for nothing, when it would cost a thousand dollars for extras and costumes alone down here. Carpenters and paper-hangers, too, work cheaply, and what interiors you need you can put up for a few dollars. I tell you, I know the game. I've been in the business since it started, and if I had a few thousand to work with, I wouldn't be letting you or anybody else in on this; but I'm broke. I'm willing to tie up with any one that's got money enough to float us. Once we get a start, I tell you, we'll be on top in a few months! The fortunes that have been made in movies up to now are nothing to the ones that are going to be made when they get the business on a practical footing. The ones that get in first will reap the harvest."

"But I don't know a thing about the motion-picture business," protested Bucky.

"You don't need to know anything about it," said Dillon frankly. "I'm not getting you in for what you know; I'm getting you in for your money. I'm an expert camera-man, and I can round you up a director and an assistant director in ten minutes, if you say the word. They'll attend to things. All you'll have to do will be to foot the bills."

"I have had some experience at that myself," grinned Bucky.

"Have you?"

"Yes. I've had a good deal more money than I have now, but I lost it in just that way—footing bills. Five thousand is about all I've got, and I don't mean to let it slip through my fingers easily."

"That's right! I'd be darned careful of it, too, if I had it," admitted Dillon.

"Suppose we go into the definite details of this proposition, then," suggested Bucky. "Let's get it all down on paper—the cost of production, and so on, I mean."

"Sure!" agreed Dillon. "Come over here to the desk, and we'll figure."

He led the way to the little writing-alcove off the main foyer and seated himself at the desk. Whereupon, with Bucky bending interestedly over him the while, he began to compute the expenditure necessary in the making of an average five-reel feature photoplay.

It was impossible, of course to give exact figures without knowing what the scenario was going to call for, but he tried to give the outside cost wherever there was doubt. Concerning such things as the price of raw stock, the cost of developing and printing and polishing, and the salaries of necessary workmen, he could speak definitely, of course; but he had to guess at such items as "props," uniforms, interior sets, and salaries for actors.

However, Bucky was pleased with the result. He took the sheets of paper upon which they had been making notes, and told Dillon that he would sleep upon the matter and let him know in the morning. Then they shook hands, Bucky declined with thanks an invitation to have a drink, and they separated.

Bucky walked slowly back to his hotel, his mind seething with various combinations of numerals. He found himself in an uncomfortable situation. Whether he had really stumbled upon a bit of luck, or whether he was on the verge of casting away the scanty remainder of his fortune, he could not say.

Dillon's proposition seemed a good one; but, of course, Bucky had no knowledge of

the motion-picture industry, and was inexperienced in all matters of business. There was no one to whom he could go for advice; for although Gladwin had offered such service, Bucky had small reason to trust that amiable lawyer. So he tried his best to settle the question himself.

Dillon's offer to work without wages and share in the profits impressed him. Bucky could not believe that the cameraman would be willing to take a chance like that if the thing weren't safe and sound. He had offered to give his services and the use of his camera absolutely free of charge, on condition that a share of the net profits be allowed him.

Was he an enthusiast carried away by false hopes, then? He claimed to have had years of experience in his special line.

Bucky stopped at the news-stand in his hotel and bought several magazines devoted to the motion-picture business. In his own room he looked them over carefully. In one there was an article which declared that better features would have to be forthcoming, or interest in the screen would wane. In another there were stories about various film-magnates in which their meteoric rise to fame and fortune was recorded. A third dealt with the huge salaries paid to screen stars.

It was plain that there was money enough *in* the business, if it could only be got out. Bucky began to be tremendously tempted to try his luck. He told himself that sooner or later he must strike it right; and he reminded himself of that old adage, which has been responsible for so much recklessness—"Nothing venture, nothing gain!"

When his eyes ached from much reading of fine print, he went to bed and found solace in the darkness; but his mind continued to turn over the problem. In fancy he romanced about screen beauties, deeds of valor, and bags of gold. Before he slept he had erected a gorgeous castle in Spain, whose brown-eyed chatelaine amply consoled him for the loss of the blue-eyed Sylvia.

But morning found him less confident.

He had plunged once—on Amalgamated Steel—and the memory of that disaster was still with him. It was likely to be with him for many a long day to come, for it had left him without fortune, without friends, without a home. It had knocked some of the happy-go-lucky, cocksure hopefulness of youth out of him, and some of his faith in human nature.

He awoke nervous and uncertain, inclined to vacillate back and forth; but by the time he had finished breakfast, he had talked himself into Dillon's plan.

"After all," he thought, "five thousand is a mere nothing. It's enough to go into the grocery business on a small scale, perhaps, or to open any sort of small shop; but who wants to be a tradesman? Certainly no college-bred youth of twenty-three! There are bigger things in life to aim at than that!"

Accordingly, Bucky went round to Dillon's hotel again at eleven, to tell him that the deal was on.

Dillon had the director and the assistant-director there to meet him.

CHAPTER XIX

AN ADIRONDACK EPISODE

CARLETON FIELDING, the director, had grown up in the show business. Beginning as assistant property-man, he had eventually got a small part, and had risen until he owned his own touring repertory show. Just when he had begun to feel his age, and to think longingly of settling down in one spot, the motion-picture industry had developed, and he had been one of the first to go into it. Consequently, he knew the tricks of the trade.

He had learned, as Dillon had, how hard it is to get rich by saving out of a salary. He was more than eager to go in for something that would net him a chance for bigger gains; and it was soon apparent to Bucky that no more valuable man could well have been found.

Fielding was practical. He was a hustler. He knew his business. He had

an appreciation for the artistic as well as the dramatic. He knew just the story that would make a wonderful feature. He had been saving it to do himself some time when he got hold of money enough, but he was willing to throw it in if Bucky would pay the five hundred dollars that the author wanted for the rights—greedy fellow!

It was a magazine novelette, and Fielding read it aloud to them, elaborating the situations and incidents until even Bucky realized its promise. Moreover, the scene, which was laid in the mountains of Kentucky, fitted in admirably with their scheme of going up into the Adirondacks to work.

Before they reached the tenth chapter, it was decided that that was the feature they would do. The author, whom Fielding knew, was quite willing to make the sale and to work with Fielding upon the scenario.

While they were thus engaged, Bucky, Dillon, and Greaves, the assistant director, set about making other arrangements. They interviewed actors and actresses, and selected a cast. They bought up some old scenery and sent it by freight. They bought raw stock, and arranged to have it developed and polished as fast as they sent it down.

Then they paid for their transportation, and on the third day after Bucky's decision to enter the film game they were off.

There were eleven of them, all told—Bucky, Dillon, Fielding, the director, Greaves, his assistant, and seven players who were to take the principal parts. Dolly Carson, a strange little elfin creature, with her brown hair in curls and a perpetual smile, was to act *Lucinda*, the leading rôle. Her husband, a tall, dark, muscular, rather handsome man, was to play her lover in the picture. Personally, neither one interested Bucky very much. They were quite common individuals, graduates from Western stock companies.

A man named Dickson was to play *Jeb*, the jealous rival. He was a dreadful bore, with a rich collection of old stories

and stale jokes at his command, and possessing the objectionable amiability of the born grafter. With these three Bucky had little to do, for Lenhart, the leading man, was jealous of his wife and inclined to be quarrelsome, the wife was fretful and dull, and Dickson was tiresome.

He spent most of his time with the devoted old couple who played *Lucinda's* parents, and with little Bobby Murdock and his mother. Bobby was quite a high-salaried actor, with a great deal of screen experience behind him, in spite of the fact that he was only nine years old. Mrs. Murdock was a sweet, wholesome, motherly sort of woman, who kept Bobby in his place, and constituted herself a sort of overseer of the whole party.

She had been a clever actress herself in her day, but had married and grown stout, and now she contented herself with giving all her time and attention to Bobby and his career. He had lessons regularly every day, no matter where they were or what else he was doing. He thought more of his mother's approval, feared her displeasure more, too, than he cared for the criticism of the director.

During his brief experience with "The Girl in Yellow" Bucky had seen something of the brighter side of professional life, and had had an intimate peep into the lives of the petted darlings of the public, for Sylvia had managed to surround herself with popular and well-advertised people. Now he saw something of the other side.

Mrs. Murdock and old Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie regaled him with stories of cheap touring companies and picture organizations in the pioneer days. He learned how it was possible to spend one's life moving from town to town, season after season, with one's belongings in a trunk and a suit-case, and one's only compensation in the applause of the fickle public and the flowery praise of the small-town press.

Old Guthrie still had a scar on his left hand, where a bullet had hit him in the early days of the West, when the cowboys hadn't liked his behavior as *Simon Legree*,

and had begun to shoot at him. Mrs. Guthrie showed her diamond ring that she kept for pawning purposes in times of need. Mrs. Murdock confessed that she had once conducted a laundry in Memphis, Tennessee, for five months, when her show stranded there and left her without a penny to her name. Even Bobby had his story of the Kansas cyclone that buried them under a fallen house for a day and a half, during which time they had neither food nor drink.

To Bucky, this side of life was a revelation. Though he hadn't been actually well off before coming into his great-uncle's money, he had never faced real hardship or known actual want. Life hadn't been a struggle for him. He had read of such things, of course, but they had never been brought home to him. They had never presented themselves to him as hideous realities. That people should suffer for want of food or a roof or a fire seemed incomprehensible to him. He had always had such things as a matter of course.

Mrs. Murdock, smiling at his horror, told him that it was all in a lifetime, and that one had to take the bitter with the sweet. And the Guthries nodded and declared that at least they'd always been together, so they had that to be thankful for. Bucky felt rather ashamed of his own fits of loneliness and gloom, and told himself severely that it was a good thing he hadn't had to face any *real* misfortunes.

After the heat of the city, Silver Lake seemed a haven of cool greenery. The scenery was as lovely as Dillon had predicted, the inn was comfortable, although somewhat old-fashioned, and the meals were substantial—which proved fortunate, for the whole Independent Feature Film Company, as Bucky and Dillon had agreed to call them, developed enormous appetites.

Though the days were warm, the nights were so cool that heavy blankets were needed, but everybody slept all the better for that, and awoke in the mornings in great shape for work. There was no dissipating there in the mountains; nothing

to do at night but to play the wheezy old organ and sing, to gather around a table for a game of cards, to read or sew or swap yarns. It was Mrs. Murdock, of course, who sewed.

They invariably turned in at ten o'clock or thereabouts, tired from their long hours in the open air. Eight o'clock in the morning usually found them assembling in the big lower hallway, ready for breakfast and the day's work.

Breakfast was served at half past eight, and announced by means of a huge handbell, which Captain Aiken rang. Just why he was called "captain" nobody knew, for he was a small, wizened, henpecked creature who was not even captain of his own soul. His business in life seemed to be to wait upon Mrs. Aiken and do her bidding. He helped to serve at table, ran errands, drove the bus, played chambermaid and bell-boy upon occasion, and made himself generally useful.

Mrs. Aiken, who was amply proportioned, and had the manner of a general in war-time, was everything that the captain was not. She was plainly the executive head of the firm, and such was her self-importance that it made her presence rather depressing. However, at meal-times she "served up" in the kitchen, and so was not in evidence. It was the good-natured captain who bore in the steaming, well-filled platters and waited at table, encouraging every one to take just a bit more, even when an absolute limit had been reached, and, as Bobby Murdock put it in theatrical parlance, "they were playing to capacity and sold out!"

Bucky found his spirits rising irrepressibly in his present surroundings. Craving companionship as he did by nature, he enjoyed the unconventional familiarity of this little circle, for every one was already addressing all the others by their first names, and most of the social formalities were similarly dispensed with. Moreover, the same smothered excitement—the spirit of something pending, something in the air, characterized the motion-picture business as he had experienced in the show

business; and Bucky liked that. He liked, too, the interest that the other guests took in the company. He even warmed to Dolly Carson and Lenhart and Dickson.

But stout Mrs. Murdock remained his chief chum. She it was who sat beside him, watching Dillon as he set up the camera at the first location. She it was, too, who explained to Bucky anything that he wanted to know; and he had many questions to ask.

He was keenly interested in this new venture—not only in the outcome of it, but in the game itself. His great regret was that he couldn't be more active in the production of the picture; but of course there was nothing that he really knew how to do. His function lay in supplying the cash to finance the venture. Beyond that, he was of no further aid.

But he was always on hand, and as they took scene after scene his enthusiasm increased. Each day's work seemed better to him than the one before, each appeared to be full of dramatic interest or laughable touches of comedy.

From the motion-picture plays he had seen, he felt convinced that they had found a perfect story for their purpose, and that they were turning out a first-rate feature film. Indeed, he could not see how it could possibly fail. Bobby Murdock was cute. Dolly was pretty and winsome. Lenhart was handsome and courageous. Dickson was a villainous villain. Guthrie was a real type as the grim old moonshiner, and Mrs. Guthrie was amusing as his wife.

The situations were exciting. The scenery was beautiful. The mob of extra people, as moonshiners and moonshiners' wives and children, was patiently drilled by Fielding and Greaves, and acquitted itself gloriously, after hours and hours and innumerable feet of film had been wasted.

Bucky pointed out to Dillon and Fielding and the rest—and they pointed out to him—that this feature was going to be unusual, because it was going to have *everything*. Indeed, confidence in it ran

so high that a permanent company was talked of before the end of the first week.

Meanwhile, the Independent Feature Film Company was working hard, eating ravenously, sleeping soundly, and thriving. Nobody noticed that the beds were hard. Nobody noticed that the food was of the plainest. It was substantial and well cooked, and that was enough. Tired and hungry people are not hypercritical.

Bucky got stouter, from drinking milk, and quite brown from the sun. Mrs. Aiken, succumbing to his politeness, his wholesomeness and charm, lent him a horse, on which he rode twice a day to the village, for mail, or for any supplies that the captain had forgotten. And as he galloped over the dusty mountain roads or took short cuts through the woods, his heart beat high, his blue eyes shone, and he forgot that such a person as Sylvia Nelson had ever existed.

He had become a sturdy mountain youth as readily as he had once become a millionaire, for youth is adaptable. And because he had a soft heart and was tremendously impressionable, he formed a violent attachment for Mrs. Murdock—who was thirty-eight or more, quite stout, and not at all handsome. He spent much of his time lying on the grass near her, as she sewed, or wandering about on exploring expeditions with Bobby.

It was really something motherly about her that won Bucky, and she knew it. She was far too sensible to misunderstand; so she scolded him and nagged him and paid him lavish compliments, she flattered him and criticised him, and grew enormously fond of him, too, and treated him exactly as his own mother might have done. But her heart ached a little, now and then, with vain regret, when she watched him and Bobby together. For hearts do not always age as bodies age, and despite Mrs. Murdock's motherliness, she was very young in heart.

The picture was finished in four weeks, exactly as Dillon had promised, and the players left Silver Lake Inn. Fielding and

Dillon and Greaves stayed on to assemble and join the film, claiming that they could work there as well as in New York, and that it was both cheaper and cooler.

So the party broke up. Bucky, who was staying, of course, invited Bobby and Mrs. Murdock to remain as his guests, but Mrs. Murdock declined, explaining that she was to meet her sister in New York, on the sister's annual visit from the West. To Bucky's great regret, they accordingly parted, Bobby hugging and kissing him, Mrs. Murdock saying her good-by not very steadily, and gazing at him out of misty brown eyes. And Bucky rode back to find the inn strangely lonely, while Mrs. Murdock—in the stuffy train—made no further attempt to hold back her tears.

The assembling of the picture interested Bucky very little. Dillon and Greaves did most of the work, unwinding the great reels of developed and polished film, cutting it into scenes, labeling each according to its number, and then joining them again in their proper order.

There was a certain satisfaction and pleasure in examining the scenes and recalling the taking of them; but the mechanical processes necessary before the negative could be printed and projected on a screen bored Bucky. He awaited impatiently the completion of the task; and the day on which he set out upon his return to New York was a happy one for him.

CHAPTER XX

DISAPPOINTED HOPES

NEW YORK was pleasantly cool again, for it was the first week in September. Well-to-do people were already flocking back from mountains and shore, and the streets and shops, the theaters and cafés, began to look gay again.

Not that Bucky entered into the merry-making. For reasons of economy, as well as to be near Dillon and Greaves, he had gone to a boarding-house on Forty-Sixth

Street instead of the hotel where he had stayed before. The house—once a private dwelling—was clean and comfortable after a fashion. The rooms were large. The other boarders were not officiously friendly, though one or two of them nodded upon passing him on the stairs or in the halls.

Mrs. Andrews, the woman who kept the place, scarcely ever showed herself above the basement. There she resided and there she was to be found when required. A coarse and dreary-looking Polish maid brought towels and kept Bucky's room in order.

He found the atmosphere of the house far from pleasing, but it was cheap, and his money was running low. He dined at an Italian *table d'hôte* that Dillon and Greaves frequented—dinner with wine, sixty-five cents—and his breakfasts and lunches at the Automat or the Buffet Exchange, where one served oneself and saved the tip. He had sometimes eaten at similar places during his college days.

For amusement, all three went to motion-picture shows; and thus they were enabled to compare their own work with the products of the big concerns—to the everlasting disgrace of the latter. Bucky, who grew more and more anxious as his balance at the bank dwindled, found this vastly encouraging.

The print was finished in three days, and pronounced by Dillon and Greaves to be ready for projection. Accordingly, a room was rented for the purpose, and the Independent Feature Film Company was called together again to witness the first run.

Mrs. Murdock came, with Bobby and her sister from the West, and declared it the best feature she had ever seen. The others liked it, too. Even the operator came forth from his booth and said:

"You've got a nice little feature there!"

Bucky thought that he had been happy on the opening night of "The Girl in Yellow," when the audience began to applaud. He thought he had been happy

on the day when Gladwin told him of the fortune he had inherited from old Chauncey Raymond Rollins; but now he knew that he had never been happy before. The thought that the picture stood an excellent chance of being snapped up, and that he might soon be back among the gilded plutocrats, was meat and wine to him.

That very morning he had seen posters announcing the New York opening of "The Girl in Yellow," and they had read:

MONTGOMERY WHEELER PRESENTS—

He pictured the amazement and wonder of the company upon the first night to find *him* in the stage box, arrayed in his old-time splendor, and looking better than ever—for he did look better, thanks to the weeks in the mountains. He pictured a chance meeting with Reddy in the lobby, and his casual announcement that he had gone in for moving pictures and was "cleaning up." He pictured Sylvia's disgust; and the whole fancy delighted him immeasurably.

"How soon do you think we'll sell it?" he asked Dillon, as they left the projection-room, the precious film in various tin boxes under their arms.

"That depends on how soon we can make appointments to show it," answered Dillon. "I'll start out and see the men that I know as soon as we've left these at the house."

"And I'll see the men that I know," added Greaves. "Though I feel pretty sure that the first ones to see the film will grab it!"

"And pay cash?" asked Bucky.

"Sure!"

Bucky walked on air.

"And how soon can we start on other features?" he asked.

"As soon as you like. We can get three or four companies going, if you want to."

"You bet I want to," answered Bucky. "I want to get busy! I want to make things hum!"

"We might get a franchise on some program and guarantee to turn out so

many features a year," Greaves told him. "Then we'd be on Easy Street!"

"We *must* get this one disposed of, anyway, before next Monday week," said Bucky. "I've a particular reason for insisting upon that."

"It's a cinch," answered Dillon.

They left the film with Bucky at his boarding-house, and set out to make the rounds of the exchanges. But from the very beginning they met with disappointments. Some concerns were going in for seven-reelers and weren't buying any more fives. Some wouldn't consider a feature unless it had a big star in it. They said what the public wanted was legitimate stars—well advertised, popular stars. They said the exhibitors weren't interested in features unless they had big stars in them. It was in vain that Dillon protested:

"We've got a story. We don't need a star!"

The exchanges would have none of it, and the first day's interviews ended in disappointment.

Dillon and Greaves and Bucky were not discouraged, however. They had studied their picture carefully, and were sure that they had something good. The difficulty was to get some one to look at it.

On the following day Dillon brought some men to look at it, but they excused themselves at the end of the second reel. Kentucky mountain stuff had been done to death, they said, and they couldn't possibly handle any more of it.

The days that followed were mere repetitions of the first two. No one seemed to want a five-reel feature, without a star, whose scene was laid in the mountains of Kentucky. No one seemed to care how strong the story was, how perfect the photography.

Dillon and Greaves and Bucky argued until they were hoarse. They declared that people wanted to be amused, whether Billie Burke amused them, or Geraldine Farrar, or Sally Smith. They said the public was looking for entertainment, not for names.

But the film magnates in charge of the exchanges were adamant. They had their own ideas. They insisted that they knew what the public wanted and what the exhibitors wanted. They admitted that the Independent Feature Film Company had turned out a fine feature, but unfortunately it was one that they were not just then in a position to release. They suggested that the company should make another feature, a seven-reeler with a big star in it, and *then* come to them and they'd talk business.

But the Independent Feature Film Company had no more money. And when Bucky suggested that they should put an advertisement in the newspapers and try to interest new capital, Dillon sadly informed him that it was next to impossible to interest any one in motion-pictures nowadays, as too many crooked tricks had been pulled and too many capitalists had been bitten. Even the stock of some of the biggest concerns was a drug on the market.

Bucky came to realize, then, that the little producer was at the mercy of the exchanges. His features were useless to him unless he could release them, and he couldn't release them except at the pleasure of the exchanges. There was no way of showing them direct to the exhibitors. There was no exchange open to the small man.

The big concerns produced what they pleased, released what they pleased, and the exhibitors had to take that or nothing; for if they didn't do just what the exchanges told them, they were left with a theater on their hands and no films to show. True, they could take some outside feature, like this one of Bucky's, for one night, but it would be months before Bucky could give them another, and there weren't enough independent producers to keep the theater open in the mean time.

Nor could Bucky make a second feature at all until he had got at least five thousand dollars out of his investment.

That meant leasing the film many, many times.

In a word, the Independent Feature Film Company was in a hopeless situation, and Bucky presently realized the fact. If they had made a seven-reeler, with a star, and with the scenes laid elsewhere than in Kentucky, they might possibly have had a chance to sell it—providing they discovered some one with an open date and no feature ready; but as things were, they were helpless.

Everywhere they went they were told that hundreds of big companies are turning out features of that sort and selling them for next to nothing. The motion-picture public has begun to demand Billie Burke, Geraldine Farrar, Mary Pickford, and Marguerite Clarke. They've been educated to a taste for personalities, and they select their evening's entertainment by the name of the player, rather than by the name of the play.

"Concerning Lucinda—a five-reel feature of Kentucky mountain life, with Dolly Carson, Robert Lenhart, Douglas Dickson, etc."—that was worth nothing. Nobody knew anything about "Concerning Lucinda." It hadn't been advertised. It might be good or bad. Film fans had no way of telling.

But offer them Miss Pauline Frederick, in anything at all, and it would be a different matter entirely. They know Pauline Frederick. They admire her. They've watched her on the stage. They've seen her picture. They've read interviews about her. They're sure to be interested in her, whether they like the photoplay she is in, or not.

So Bucky's five thousand was gone, and he had scarcely enough money left to keep him going until he found a job!

He could not blame Dillon. Dillon had believed in his proposition himself, had made no money out of the venture, and had worked like a trooper for six or seven weeks. Nobody was to blame—except perhaps Bucky himself, for plunging into a thing of which he knew nothing.

(To be continued in the January number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

TAGORE

The Poet of India and His Message

by
Montrose J. Moses

IN his own country, Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, is regarded as a saint. When he enters a hall to speak, crowds overflow into the street and struggle to touch the hem of his garments. There are some enthusiastic admirers who, supporting the Buddhistic doctrine of reincarnation, believe his spirit to be that of Christ, and turn to his philosophical writings, not as a reflection of Vedanta beliefs, but as the universal reflection of Christianity.

For generation after generation the Tagores have been famous in India, in the realm of affairs, as painters, poets, musicians, and as social reformers; but the Western world knew little of them until three years ago, when the Nobel prize for the creation of idealistic literature was awarded to this son of an ancient house.

Yet Rabindranath Tagore had been to London before that, and at Oxford had become familiar with the traditions of English poetry sufficiently to add to those traditions a form all his own, which is marked by originality and lucidity of style. He had even ventured over to America in order to place his son in an agricultural college, and had delivered a series of lectures at Harvard University. These lectures, published in a volume entitled "Sadhana," give his interpretation of the universal spirit of unity which pervades the world, and which is the heart of his belief.

The world in general is just coming to know something of Rabindranath Tagore,



though he is fifty-five years old, and has for nearly two decades been at the head and front of the modern movement in India. If that country is to be understood by our civilization, it will depend largely on our intelligent acceptance of the utterances of this poet and teacher.

A number of years ago, when Tagore was in London, and was the center of literary admiration, headed by that astute critic, Mr. Ernest Rhys, he almost prophesied the coming of the present war. In frank words he told his friends that Western civilization was going to meet a severe test, during which time it would have to give heed to India's message. He pointed out that the religion of the East was not all superstition, was not all worship of ancestors and idols.

In the modesty of his nature he did not dwell too much on the fact that his father, Debendranath Tagore, was one of the greatest spiritual leaders known to modern India—one who, declining to be a prince, contented himself with the title of "great sage." There is a saying in the East that "the maharajas (princes) die, but the maharshis (great-sages) live forever." The present state of Europe is a fulfilment of Tagore's warning.

We are told that while in London this mystic poet was interested in all things, but the power of creation, of writing, departed from him so long as he was in the midst of bustle and speed. From his earliest youth he had been brought up in an atmosphere of contemplation. In the

education of every Indian youth there are hours set apart when he is taught to commune with the infinite.

Yet, with this picture of silence in mind, do not think that Tagore is an ascetic; that he does not believe in the world as men and women live it. He is one of the world's workers. He is not merely one of the world's preachers, but he lives what he preaches.

HIS THREEFOLD WORK FOR INDIA

He has been in the forefront of the religious movement, carrying on the traditions of his father. He has also been concerned with the political advancement of his country to such an extent that when he finally withdrew from active participation, there was a protest from all sides. But he left politics for his third and final contribution to the India of to-day. He is an educational reformer, giving practical illustration of his theories by the establishment, with the sanction of his father, of a school at Bolpur.

All the Tagores, when they have undertaken a thing, have become the head and front of their special interest. According to a friend of the family, Mr. Roy, one of them is the greatest musical authority in India; another figures as leader of the Hindu revival of Indian art, with a reputation as a great painter. They have all been wealthy, and so, when Tagore was a boy, and in later life, he was not burdened by anxiety over his material future. When the Nobel prize of forty thousand dollars was sent him, he devoted it to the establishment of a new course in his school. He was not pleased by the notoriety that came with the distinction.

"They have taken away my shelter," he told Mr. Rhys.

In our modern world of feverish progress and of feverish annihilation, Tagore's visit to the western hemisphere comes as a symbol of that universal brotherhood about which some of us are speaking as the possible outcome of this war. His own personal life is an illustration of the

fact that the saint has to pass through the fires of temptation before he gets to the true meaning of life. As a young man, Tagore was a good liver, an esthete in his dress, a romantic poet. But, if one reads his poems of love and passion, which are available to us in an English translation that he himself has made, published in a volume called "The Gardener," even there are to be seen the pure depths of that passion out of which, as he grew older and wiser, there came spiritual revelation.

TAGORE'S VISION OF LIFE

One day, as he confesses in his "Reminiscences," which should be translated, "a veil was suddenly drawn, and everything I saw became luminous. The whole scene was one perfect music, one marvelous rhythm. The houses in the street, the children playing, all seemed part of one luminous whole, inexpressibly glorious. The vision went on for seven or eight days. Every one, even those who wearied me, seemed to lose their outer barrier of personality; and I was full of gladness, full of love, for every person and every tiniest thing. That was one of the first things that gave me the inner vision, and I have tried to explain it in my poems. I have felt ever since that this is my goal—to explain the fulness of life, in its beauty, as perfection."

This same idea finds even clearer expression in another volume, "Gitanjali, or Song Offerings," done in a free form of poetic prose which suggests the Bible on one hand and Walt Whitman on the other. You find in this book his belief as to the mission of the poet; you find the highest pitch of devotional love. For Rabindranath Tagore has found his living God in everything around him: his child-worship, his patriotism—everything is consecrated to the belief that the divine principle is in all things. Here is his prayer of life:

Strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart.
Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.



SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, THE INDIAN POET, PHILOSOPHER, AND EDUCATIONIST,
WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR IDEALISTIC LITERATURE IN 1913

From a photograph by Crowther, Kobe, Japan

Give me the strength to make my love fruitful
in service.
Give me the strength never to disown the poor
or bend my knees before insolent might.
Give me the strength to raise my mind high
above daily trifles.
And give me the strength to surrender my
strength to thy will with love.

And his chant of death is not one
where he shows shame for having lived:

When I go from hence let this be my parting
word, that what I have seen is unsurpass-
able.
I have tasted of the hidden honey of this lotus
that expands on the ocean of light, and thus
am I blessed—let this be my parting word.
In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had
my play, and here have I caught sight of
Him that is formless.
My whole body and my limbs have thrilled with
His touch who is beyond touch; and if the
end comes here, let it come—let this be my
parting word.

A MAN IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD

When we become tempted to say, in
the course of our daily traffic, that such
writers are not practical in their philo-
sophical point of view, let us not be de-
ceived. Tagore, in his fifty-five years,
has communed much with the infinite,
but he has always been a man of affairs.
Like Maeterlinck, he gains his strength
by contact with the world.

His father once sent his eldest son,
Dwijendranath Tagore, to look after one
of his country estates; but the young man
was a philosopher, and could not keep
his mind fixed on the fields, and on the
labor problems that were imminent. So
Rabindranath was sent in his stead, and
all went well.

This occupation tested the poet's
executive powers, brought forth his so-
cialist sympathies with the workers of In-
dia; but more than that, it brought him
close to the heart of nature. It was this
experience, probably, which prompted Ta-
gore to send his own son to America for
that scientific training which he saw In-
dia most needed.

During all these full years, Tagore's
literary powers were being fully devel-

oped. He was writing novels and short
stories. He was developing his theories
of music, and his English friends have
written glowingly of those afternoons in
London when he would sing his songs
of India for them. He was writing plays
and acting in them, for he is noted for
his histrionic abilities. Even now, when
one of his plays is to be given at his
school, he takes part, and it is said that
he is a magnificent personage in his
"King of the Dark Chamber."

Those who have read "The Post-
Office" will acknowledge Tagore to be as
poetic a playwright as Maeterlinck in
"The Death of Tintagiles," or as Haupt-
mann in "Hannele." It is full of the
same child-love and the same understand-
ing of the child's imaginative nature
which permeate his volume of child-
poems, "The Crescent Moon." He can
revitalize Indian mythology, as he did in
"Chitra," and give it universal signifi-
cance. All of this mystic work he can
do, as a distinctive voice in an age
which needs the spiritual man. And he
still remains practical, still remains in
touch with human affairs as they affect
men and women.

A FREE CRITIC OF THE WEST

Tagore has done nothing for the sake
of expediency. King George V knighted
him, and he is Sir Rabindranath, but that
does not prevent him from criticising the
present political status in India. Nor
does he bid for the admiration of the
Western world by being mute to the
faults of its civilization. He is of the
firm belief that the East, at this crucial
moment, has something to contribute to
the West. It is his hope that when the
smoke of battle clears away, all mankind
will be fused by the fire into a spiritual
conviction of universal brotherhood. He
writes:

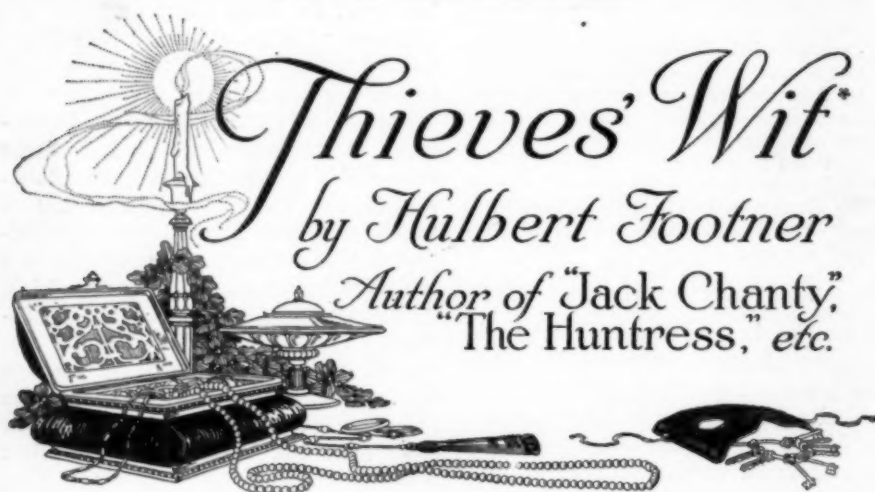
To a Western observer our civilization ap-
pears as all metaphysics, as to a deaf man
piano-playing appears to be mere movement of
fingers and no music. He cannot think that we

have found some deep basis of reality upon which we have built our institutions. Unfortunately, all proofs of reality are in realization. The reality of the scene before you depends only upon the fact that you can see, and it is difficult for us to prove to an unbeliever that our civilization is not a nebulous system of abstract speculation.

If this is so, then it behooves us to read Rabindranath Tagore. While he may talk for the press during the time he

is in this country, it is in his books that he truly speaks. Read but the song offerings in "Gitanjali," and you will understand the full meaning of the biblical promise that "the pure in heart shall see God."

Tagore is of the stuff that saints are made of, not only in India, but the world over. His coming in these times is fraught with meaning.



XXIX

I HAVE spoken more than once of Oscar Nilson, the wig-maker—the best wig-maker in New York. His little shop, on a quiet side street north of Madison Square, is quaint enough to be the setting of an old-fashioned play. The walls are lined with old cuts of historical personages, and of famous Thespians as historical personages, all with particular attention to their hirsute features. On the counter stands a row of forms, each bearing some extraordinary kind of scalp. Oscar deals in make-up as a side line, and the air bears the intoxicating odor of grease-paint and cold-cream.

Oscar's business is chiefly with the theatrical profession, but many an old beau and fading belle have found out that

he knows more about restoring youth than the more fashionable beautifiers. He loves his business. His knowledge—historical, artistic, scientific—is immense, but all in terms of human hair. He can tell you offhand how Napoleon wore his in 1803 or any other year of his career, and will make you an exact sketch of the toupee ordered by Talleyrand when his fell out.

Oscar himself, strangely enough—or perhaps naturally—has next to no hair of his own, but merely a little mousy fringe above the ears. He has a jolly, rubicund face, and is held in high affection and esteem by his customers. He flatters me by taking a particular interest in my custom. I am the only one of his clients in the criminal investigation line.

When I arrived at his shop, to which

I walked from the friendly doctor's private hospital, he led me into one of the little cubicles where the trying-on takes place, and stood off to observe me from between narrowed lids.

"What will it be now?" he said. "I was sorry to read of your accident."

"A mere trifle. What would you suggest? It must stand sunlight and shadow, and be something I can keep up for a while, if necessary."

"Let me think. Your head and face offer a good starting-point for so many creations."

"In other words, the Lord left me unfinished," I said teasingly.

"Not at all! I meant that in your case there were no awkward malformations to be overcome."

From which it will be seen that Oscar is a diplomat.

"What would you say to a South American gentleman?" he asked. "New York is full of them in the summer."

I shook my head.

"No time to bone up a Spanish accent," I objected.

"An officer of a liner on shore leave?"

"On shore they look like anybody else."

"Well, then, how about an Armenian fruit-pedler?"

"That would restrict my activities too much. I must be able to go anywhere."

"I see you have an idea of your own," he said. "What is it?"

"We've used several roughneck disguises," I said. "Suppose you fix me up as a swell this time. I have a mind to stop at a fashionable hotel."

"The very thing!" cried Oscar. "A curled toupee, slightly silvered; a wash for the skin, to give an interesting pallor; a little touching up about the eyes, for an expression of world-weariness; waxed mustache, monocle—"

"Easy! The burning-glass would give me dead away. You have to be born to that."

"Well, you don't have to have the monocle," said Oscar regretfully; "but

it's very aristocratic. The costume must be exquisitely appointed, my friend. It will be expensive—"

"Expense is no object in this case," I said.

He set to work, and an hour later I left his shop a changed man. In the event of such a contingency I had already secured from Mr. Dunsany the name of his tailor, and I now left a rush order for several suits. Meanwhile I bought the best I could get ready-made. I went to the most fashionable outfitters and invested heavily. Until they displayed their stock, I had no idea that men might indulge such extravagant tastes.

All my purchases were to be sent to the Hotel Rotterdam, where I engaged an expensive suite. I believed that it would be the last place in town where the gang would think of looking for me.

I wished to persuade my enemies that I had been scared off. After having the cryptogram receipt photographed, I returned it in a plain envelope to Jumbo's flat. By telephone I instructed Keenan to discharge all the operatives, close the Forty-Second Street office, and advertise it for rent. This place had outlived its usefulness. Jumbo and Foxy had proved themselves more than a match for such operatives as could be hired.

This done, I went out to Amityville to spend a day with Sadie. I had promised to take a short holiday, and I had to wait until my new clothes were done before being seen around town. After the mad excitement of the past few days, we spent an interlude of heavenly peace under the oaks of my friend's big place.

While I was out there, an interesting report from my sole remaining operative arrived.

REPORTS OF J. M.

Sunday, June 27.

As soon as I heard that you and S. F. were all right, I went to bed, as you instructed. It seemed to me that I had scarcely fallen asleep when I was awakened by my landlady at my door, to say that a man wanted to see me. It was no more than daybreak then. Hard upon her knock Jumbo entered the room. I had

barely time to pull on my false hair and fix it. Hereafter I shall have to sleep in it.

Jumbo was in a state of no little excitement. He gave me his version of what had happened. Lorina, having apparently just escaped from her room, had called him up about half an hour before. Possibly Jumbo came to me because she had suggested a suspicion of me; but I think it more likely that he merely wanted moral support. He was badly frightened. For all his bluff, he is not a strong character. He is dependent both on Foxy and on the woman, and now seems disposed to lean on me. If he was suspicious, my sleepiness and bad temper, upon being awakened, must have reassured him.

I dressed, and we went right up to the Lexington Avenue house. It being Sunday, I had the day to myself.

Mrs. Mansfield had gone out, leaving word that we were to wait until she came in or telephoned. The two maids believed that she had gone to consult the police, and were full of highly colored accounts of the supposed robbery of the night before. The hulking black man, however, was silent and sullen. He knew! I wonder what you did to him. I don't think I ever saw a more repulsive human creature, or a more powerful one.

Foxy arrived shortly after we did. I am now admitted to terms of the closest equality by these two. The understanding is that each knows enough to the discredit of the others to insure faithfulness all around.

We all chafed at the enforced inaction, but dared not go against Lorina's instructions. She is the boss. The other two half expected the police to descend on the house at any moment.

About ten o'clock Mrs. Mansfield returned in a taxicab. This taxi, by the way, is her property, and the driver is one of the gang. The woman was handsomely dressed, without disguise of any kind.

We had a conference in the sitting-room upstairs. Mrs. Mansfield gave us some further details of the previous night. As soon as she succeeded in breaking out of her room, after telephoning to Jumbo and Foxy, she hastened up to S. F.'s house, also to your place, both of which addresses she knew. She said that she was disguised, so she must have some place outside where she changes her clothes. She found that she was too late at both places. You had carried off S. F. in your motor-car.

Mrs. Mansfield then went down to Fortieth Street. From the park opposite she watched your office for four hours. You got inside too quick for her, she said, but when you came out she got you. Her eyes gleamed like a devil's as she said it. Fancy how my heart went down!

She then changed her clothes and went straight home. She couldn't tell how seriously she had wounded you. A general prayer went

around the table that it would be your finish. She said we should hear presently.

She seems to have a practically unlimited number of men subject to her orders. While she waited for you at your office, she sent for several, and posted them near. They mixed in the crowd that surrounded you when you fell. One of them had been instructed to make away with your satchel. Another was to follow the ambulance to the hospital. A third was to recover her gun, after the excitement was over, and return it to her.

The first of these, an evil-looking young blackguard, came in while we talked. He reported no success. The satchel was strapped to your wrist, he said, and when he started to unfasten it, the crowd began to murmur.

He added that you had been shot in the shoulder, and had been carried to Bellevue. He gave it as his opinion that you were not as badly hurt as you made out. This cheered me greatly, but bitter disappointment was expressed around the table.

Later, another of Lorina's men reported by telephone that he had learned from an orderly in the hospital that you had suffered only a slight flesh-wound, and would be able to leave the hospital next day. On hearing this, she gave orders to have every exit from the hospital watched. Instructions were to shoot to kill. If it can be found out in advance at what time you are going to leave, she means to be on hand herself.

As soon as I could get out without exciting suspicion, I sent you a warning by telephone.

J. M.

Monday, June 28.

To-day I had to go to my work as usual, so I didn't see any of the gang until night. In our present state of excitement and uncertainty we have abandoned the Turtle Bay as a meeting-place. I found my partners in anything but a good humor.

In the first place, they had learned through the friendly orderly that in spite of all their measures you had been safely spirited out of the hospital in an ambulance. It was learned, by way of the ambulance-driver, that you had been carried to Dr. Jenkins's private hospital. It was then too late to do anything. By the time they got there, you had left, and the town had swallowed you up.

The entire strength of the gang, excepting me, has been devoted all day to picking up your trail, but so far without any success. They have watched all your usual haunts, your flat, your restaurant, S. F.'s home, and your office on Fortieth Street. Foxy brought in word that the International Detective Agency on Forty-Second Street had been closed, and all the operatives discharged. He trailed Keenan, the supposed

manager, to a railway office down-town, where he was reengaged for his old position.

Jumbo came in with the information that the piece of evidence which they regarded as of such importance had been returned to him. I don't know what this was. Lorina, examining it, said that it appeared to have traces of paste on the corners, and that you had probably had it photographed.

Foxy gave it as his opinion that you had been scared off.

"We know there's no one backing him," said he. "He has no financial resources. He can't keep it up!"

Lorina would have none of that. Her eyes become incandescent with hatred when your name is mentioned.

"Don't you believe it!" she snarled. "That man will never give up. I have seen his face, and I know! He's a bulldog. He will never rest until he has pulled us down, unless we stop him with a bullet!"

Jumbo became panicky. His suggestion was for the gang to scatter and lie low for the time being.

Lorina scorned him. She proceeded to point out to us all just where you stood. She appeared to know as well as you do. Her insight is uncanny. You have no case, she said, except possibly against Foxy. You are too conceited to be satisfied with one. You will not strike until you have a chance of landing the whole gang.

"But how about the kidnaping?" asked Jumbo.

"The police would have been here before this if Enderby wanted to proceed on that," she said. "Why, he watched me walk away after I shot him and never said a word. No, I tell you he hasn't got the evidence yet, and we're safe until he gets it. He's aiming to make a grand haul of the whole gang together and get his name in the head-lines."

The others were considerably impressed. They asked for instructions.

"We've got to go on just as we are," said Lorina. "Foxy must keep the room on Forty-Ninth Street, Jumbo the flat on One Hundredth Street, and I stay here. Let everybody go about freely, and meet here as usual—that is, all except English. English mustn't come here again. Enderby isn't on to him yet. If I have the right dope, Enderby will lie low for a few days, and then, thinking that we are lulled to security, will quietly start to work again. That's why we must keep our present hang-outs. He's got to come to one of them to pick us up, and then we'll have him!"

This woman is a wonder in her way. Fortunately, there is one fact that spoils all her reasoning—your humble servant.

As we broke up she said a significant thing.

"Lord, the conceit of the man, thinking he

can break up the gang! Why, if he did land all of us, it wouldn't make any difference. He hasn't got within a mile of the real boss!"

Being excited, she spoke more recklessly than usual. So it appears that our work is perhaps just beginning! J. M.

XXX

ON Wednesday morning I motored to town and took up my residence in the Hotel Rotterdam. I hardly knew myself amid such grandeur. For several days the situation remained *in statu quo*. I learned from English's daily reports that Lorina and her gang were still waiting for my next move. I, for my part, was determined to make them move first.

Only one of his reports gave me anything to do. I quote from it:

Among all the men who come and go in this den of crooks there is one who has particularly excited my interest and compassion. He is an extremely good-looking boy of eighteen or thereabouts, whom I know simply as Blondy. He seems so like a normal boy, jolly, frank, and mischievous, that I keep wondering how he fell into Lorina's clutches. He reminds me of my boy Eddie at his age.

Lorina has him thoroughly intimidated. She is more overbearing with him than with the others. He seems not to be trusted very far, but is used as errand-boy and spy. His extreme good looks and ingenious air make him valuable to them, I fancy.

Blondy's instinct seems to have led him to make friends with me, though as far as he knows I am no better than the rest. At any rate, we have had a few talks together and feel quite intimate. Without any suggestion from me, he has kept this from the others. It is quite touching.

I should very much like to get the boy out of this before the grand catastrophe. I'm sure he's worth saving. Naturally, in my position, I can't undertake any missionary work. Could you with safety arrange for some one to get hold of the lad? He tells me that he lives at the Adelphi Association House, on West One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street. Apparently it is a semiphanthropic club or boarding-house for young men. He passes there by the name of Ralph Manly.

I was in almost as unfavorable a position for undertaking "missionary work" as Mr. Dunsany. After thinking the matter over, I decided to ask the help of Dr. Jenkins, the famous surgeon who

had befriended me in the hospital. I called at his office, for the ostensible purpose of consulting him as to my health. When I was alone with him in his consulting-room I made myself known.

Being a human kind of man, notwithstanding his eminence, he was interested in the dramatic and mysterious elements of my story. Far from abusing me for taking up his valuable time, he expressed himself as very willing to help save the boy.

We consulted a directory of charities in his office, and he found that he knew several men on the board of managers of the Adelphi Association. This offered an opening. He promised to proceed with the greatest caution, and promised to write to me at my hotel if he had any luck.

Three days later I heard from him as follows:

I took my friend on the Adelphi board partly into my confidence, and between him and the doctor employed by the association to safeguard the health of the boys the matter was easily arranged. The doctor's regular weekly visit to the institution fell yesterday. He saw the boy, and, making believe to be struck by something in his appearance, put him through an examination. He hinted to the boy that he was in rather a bad way, and instructed him to report to my office for advice this morning.

The young fellow showed up in a very sober state of mind. He is really as sound as a dollar, but for the present I am keeping him anxious without being too explicit. He appears to be quite as attractive a youth as your friend said. I am very much interested, but am not yet prepared to make up my mind about him. He is coming to-morrow at half past two. If it is convenient for you to be here, I will arrange a meeting as if by accident.

Needless to say, I was at the doctor's office at the time specified. I found the blond boy already waiting among other patients in the outer office. It was easy to recognize him from Mr. Dunsany's description.

He was better than merely good-looking; he had nice eyes. He was dressed a little too showily, as is natural to a boy of that age when he is allowed to consult his own taste exclusively.

There happened to be a vacant chair

beside him, and I took it. Presently I addressed some friendly commonplace to him. He responded naturally. Evidently he was accustomed to having people like him.

Soon we were talking away like old friends. I was more and more taken with him. Primarily, of course, it was his good looks—always a strong recommendation; but in addition to that I was strongly affected by a quality of wistfulness in the boy's glance, of which he himself was quite unconscious. Surely, I said to myself, a boy of his age had no business to be carrying around a secret sorrow!

The doctor, issuing from his consulting-room, saw us hobnobbing together, and allowed us to wait until everybody else had been attended to.

He had me into the consulting-room first.

"Well, what do you think of him?" he asked.

"I am charmed," I said. "There are no two words about it."

"So was I," he returned, "but I didn't want to raise your hopes too high in my letter."

After discussing what we would do with him, we had the boy in.

"Ralph, my friend Mr. Boardman wishes to be regularly introduced," said the doctor.

Boardman was the name I had taken in my present disguise. The boy shook hands nicely; he was neither too bashful nor too brash.

"I tell Boardman," said the doctor, "that if he had done his duty by his country, and had had half a dozen sons like you, he would have no time to be worrying about his appendix now."

"Has your father got half a dozen like you?" I asked.

An expression of pain ran across the boy's face.

"I have no brothers," he said. "My father is dead."

"Well, since you're a fatherless son, and I'm a sonless father—with an appendix—perhaps we can cheer each other

up a little," I said. "Will you have dinner with me at my hotel to-night?"

Boys seldom see anything suspicious in sudden overtures of friendship. Ralph accepted, blushing with pleasure.

The dinner was a great success. I don't know which of us was the better entertained. My young friend's prattle, ingenuous, boastful, light-headed, renewed my own boyhood. It was rather painful, though, to see one naturally so frank obliged to pull up when he found himself approaching dangerous ground. Then he would glance at me to see if I had noticed anything.

I invited him several times after that. It was a risk, of course, but one must take risks. At the same time, I was pretty sure from Mr. Dunsany's reports that Ralph never talked of his outside affairs to any of the gang. At least, he never told Mr. Dunsany anything about his pleasant dinners with Mr. Boardman at the Rotterdam.

The dénouement of this incident really belongs a little later in my story, but for the sake of continuity I will give it here.

I soon saw that I should have no difficulty in winning Ralph's full confidence. His gratitude for friendliness was very affecting. I could see that he often wished to bare his painful secret. I let him take his own time about it.

It was the doctor's offering him a position in a friend's office that brought matters to a head. Ralph declined it with a painful air, but could give no reason for the refusal. Afterward, when I had him alone with me, I saw that it was coming.

"That certainly was decent of Dr. Jenkins," he said diffidently. "I don't know why he's so good to me."

"Oh, you're not a bad sort of boy," I said lightly.

"You, too," he said shyly. "Especially you. I—I never had a man friend before."

I smiled encouragingly.

"I suppose you wonder why I couldn't take the position?" he went on.

"That's your affair."

"But I want to tell you. I—I wouldn't be allowed to take it. I am not a free agent."

"Perhaps we could help you to be one," I suggested.

"I don't know. Perhaps you wouldn't want to have anything more to do with me. Oh, there's a lot I want to tell you," he cried imploringly; "but I don't know how you'll take it!"

"Try me."

"Would you—would you kick me out," he said, agitated and breathless, "if you knew that my dad had committed a forgery—if you knew that he had died in prison?"

"Why, no," I said calmly. "I suspect you were not responsible for that."

A sigh of relief escaped him.

"You are kind! But that's only the beginning," he went on. "I feel that I can tell you now. I'm in an awful hole. I suppose you will think I'm a weak character for not trying to get out of it sooner; but I didn't know what to do!"

"Tell me all about it," I said.

And he did—all about Lorina and Foxy and Jumbo as he knew them. They didn't trust him far. He knew nothing of their actual operations, but his honest young heart told him that they were crooks. Lorina held him under a spell of terror. Up to this time he had not been able even to form the idea of escaping her.

There are those who would blame the boy, I have no doubt, but I am not one of them. I have seen too often that a mind which may afterward become strong and self-reliant, is at Ralph's age fatally subservient to older minds. Those who would blame him should remember that until he met the doctor and myself he had not a disinterested friend in the world. They must grant that he instantly reacted to kindness and decent feelings.

"How did you first get into this mess?" I asked, strongly curious.

"I'd have to tell you my whole life to explain that."

"Fire away!"

I will give you his story somewhat abridged.

"My mother died when I was a baby," he said. "I do not remember her. My father and I lived alone with servants, who were always changing. We did not seem to catch on with people. I mean that we didn't seem to have friends, as everybody else had. I thought this was strange when I was little. My father was quite an old man, but we got along pretty well. He was what they called a handwriting expert. He wrote books about handwriting. Lawyers consulted him, and he gave evidence at trials."

"What was his name?" I asked.

"David Andrus."

I remembered the trial of David Andrus, so I was in a position to check up that part of Ralph's story.

"I was twelve years old," he went on, "when Mrs. Mansfield first began coming to our apartment. I don't know where or how my father met her, of course. He already knew her pretty well when I first saw her. At first she was kind to me, and brought me things, and I was fond of her. I told myself that we had a friend now, as other people had. I used to brag about her in school; but by and by I found out—I don't know how—that she was a sham, that her kindness meant nothing. Little by little I began to hate her, though I was careful not to let her see it, for I was afraid of her cold blue eye. Besides, my father became more and more crazy about her. He seemed to lose his good sense as far as she was concerned. She could make him do anything she wanted. Children sometimes see more than they are supposed to. The crash came about three years ago. I was fourteen then. One day my father was arrested and taken to the Tombs. Mrs. Mansfield took me to her house—not the one that she has now. She treated me all right, but I hated her. Young as I was, I held her responsible. I didn't see much of her. I don't know if you remember the trial?"

"Something of it," said I.

"The newspapers were full of it. I was

not allowed to attend, but, of course, I got hold of all the papers. They said that my father had got hold of blank stock-certificates by corrupting young clerks, and had then forged signatures to them and sold them. He was sentenced to Sing Sing for seven years. They took me to see him before he was sent away. He had aged twenty years. He wasn't able to say much to me. Mrs. Mansfield told me that I must change my name, and sent me to a good school in Connecticut. She paid the bills. I was pretty happy there, though this thing was always hanging over my head. In the summers I was sent away to a boys' camp in the mountains. Mrs. Mansfield told me that nobody was allowed to see my father, or to write to him, and I believed her; so it was the same to me as if he had died.

"One day, last winter, in school, I received a letter signed 'Well-Wisher,' asking me to meet the writer at a certain spot in the school woods that afternoon. Naturally I was excited by the mystery and all that. I was scared, too; but I went. I didn't tell anybody. I found a queer customer waiting for me—a man about fifty, with close-cropped hair. He told me right off that he was just out of Sing Sing. Why hadn't I ever come to see my dad, he asked? He said it was pitiful the way that father had pined for me. I stammered out that I didn't know anybody could see a prisoner. He told me about the visiting days.

"'Anyhow, you could have written,' he said.

"'He never wrote to me,' I said.

"'Sure, doesn't he write to you every writing-day? He has read me the letters—elegant letters!'

"'I never got them,' I said.

"'That's why I came,' he told me. 'Dave said he thought that woman had come between you and him.'

"The old fellow told me how to address a letter to my father, and he gave me money to go to Sing Sing when I could. I had an allowance from Mrs. Mansfield, but not enough for that. I wrote to my

father that night, but it was Easter before I had a chance to see him. I made out to Mrs. Mansfield that the school closed a day later than it did, and I used that day to go to Sing Sing. My father was in the infirmary. I scarcely recognized him. They let me stay all day. Even I could see that he was dying.

"For the first time I heard the truth of the case. It was Mrs. Mansfield who had got the certificates from the young clerks, and had brought them to my father to be filled in. When it was found out, she carried on so that he took the whole thing on himself. He thought he might as well, since he had to go to jail anyway, and he knew he would die there. Besides, she promised him to have me educated and looked after. He had no one else to leave me with. At that time he still believed in her; but in the prison he met men who knew her of old. My father was not the first whom she had been the means of landing in jail. It was then that he began to be afraid for me, and managed to send me word. He died in April. Mrs. Mansfield immediately took me out of school. She told me that my father was dead, and that it was time I went to work. I think she must have learned through her spies that I had been to visit my father, for she no longer took the trouble to put on a good face.

" 'Do this or that,' she would say now, 'or it will be the worse for you!'

"When I saw how all the other men gave in to her, I was afraid to resist. I hated her, but what could I do? I had no one to go to. I had no experience. I wasn't sure of myself. The understanding up there is that Lorina can reach you wherever you go; and if you do anything to cross her, look out! She has spies everywhere."

"I wonder why she didn't turn you adrift altogether!" I said.

"I think I am useful to them because I look honest," the boy said wretchedly. "I run errands for them, but I seldom know what it's all about."

"Have you ever heard talk up there of

a boss greater than Mrs. Mansfield?" I asked.

"Yes, but only vague talk. I've never seen him."

"Does she have you watched?"

"No. She thinks she has me where she wants me. But if she suspected anything—"

"You mustn't come here again," I said.

His face fell absurdly.

"Oh, I'm not kicking you out," I added, smiling. "I shall keep in touch with you. Would you like to see that woman go to jail?"

"Would I?" he cried, jumping up. Words failed him. "Oh! Oh, just try me, that's all!"

"Well, I'm going to put her there," I said; "and you shall help me. But we must be careful!"

XXXI

IN the mean time Lorina Mansfield, weary of the inaction I had forced on her, or perhaps persuaded that I had dropped the pursuit, boldly resumed her designs on Mrs. Levering's diamond necklace.

Mr. Dunsany, *alias* John Mattingly, *alias* English, reported that he had been detailed to go to Newport on Saturday to spy on the lady. What should he do about it, he asked? The plucky gentleman, who never hesitated to put himself in danger, became uneasy when it was a question of actually committing a crime.

We arranged a chat over the telephone, and I gave him what I considered good reasons for going ahead with the scheme. We had so much to talk over that I told him I would go up to New England by a different route. If he was not spied upon, he could come to me at Providence early on Sunday, and we could go over everything. All the time we had been working together we had never exchanged a word face to face in our natural characters.

We succeeded in pulling off the meeting. Mr. Dunsany assured me that he had not been followed. We laid out our plan of campaign. I convinced him that the

quickest and surest way to land the whole gang would be to allow them—even to assist them—to carry out a robbery from start to finish.

"Let them steal Mrs. Levering's necklace," I said. "Let them get clean away with the diamonds. We'll return them later."

"Suppose some one gets hurt?" he said nervously.

"Not likely," I said. "They play too safe a game. However, we will be on our guard."

He agreed with me, but said that if we fell down on the case he would feel obliged to give Mrs. Levering another necklace of equal value. This was a matter of ninety thousand dollars.

"We are not going to fall down," I said.

What followed can best be told by Mr. Dunsany's reports.

REPORTS OF J. M.

Newport, Sunday, July 4.

Shortly before noon to-day my patience was rewarded by the sight of Mrs. Levering walking to the Casino, accompanied by a gallant gentleman unknown to me. She did not notice me, of course. If I had been in my own person, I warrant she would not have passed me so indifferently. What marvelous faculty is it that enables a lady to know, without looking at a man, whether he is worth looking at?

I soon satisfied myself that she was wearing her veritable diamonds. Foolish woman! When I sold them to her, I warned her not to exhibit them in public. At the time there was a lot of gossip about what Levering paid me for the necklace, and I suppose every jewel thief in the country has it on his list; but Cora Levering was always feather-headed.

I telegraphed to Lorina in the code we had agreed on, and had my dinner while I waited for her answer. It came presently, instructing me to meet her in a certain hotel in Providence to-morrow at half past two. To-morrow being a holiday, I am not expected at Dunsany's. This means that I have to put in a long, empty twenty-four hours here. The place is full of my friends, eating and drinking themselves black in the face, while I have to stay at a fourth-rate hotel.

To-morrow night there is going to be a great entertainment at Fernhurst, one of the palaces on the cliffs.

J. M.

Newport, July 5, 9 P.M.

All is set for the drama to-night, and I am nervously awaiting my cue. Heaven knows what the next few hours may bring forth! When you read this, it may be up to you to get me out of jail. If we pull it off all right, I have no doubt that the newspapers will say, as they always do, that the robbery gave evidence of long and careful planning, whereas it was all fixed up in a few minutes.

I went over to Providence to-day shortly before the hour set by Lorina, and found Foxy waiting at the hotel she named. Lorina herself, he said, was in Newport looking over the ground, and would be back directly. It seems that on hearing of the affair at Fernhurst they had determined to turn the trick the same night.

Lorina came, bringing a good-looking, well-dressed young fellow whom she introduced to the crowd as Frank. He was evidently a youngster of the fashionable world; one cannot mistake the little earmarks. He has the look of a certain old New York family—I will not set down the name in writing—one of the younger sons, perhaps, whom drink and the devil have done for. At any rate, he seems to be completely under Lorina's thumb, like the rest.

Lorina was playing the part of a traveler in books—religious books, if you please! She dressed the business woman, plain and handsome, and had engaged a private sitting-room for the day to show her samples. There was actually a whole trunkful of sample books. I suppose she passed us off as her agents or customers.

She had us all in the sitting-room together. Besides Frank, Foxy, and myself, there was a fourth man, whom I recognized as her chauffeur. His name is Jim. She proceeded to lay out her campaign in the most matter-of-fact way, without wasting a word. It might have been the sales manager instructing the drummers in the fall line. Nobody seemed nervous except Frank, who was apparently new at the game.

The entertainment at Fernhurst provided our opportunity. It appeared that Frank was well acquainted with Mrs. Levering, and that of late, by Lorina's instructions, he had been particularly cultivating her society. He was to be the decoy. Furthermore, he drew for us, with rather a shaky hand, a plan of the house and grounds at Fernhurst, showing the location of roads, paths, benches, and shrubbery. Lorina used this plan in issuing her directions.

"Dancing is to begin at half past nine," she said, "but all the guests will not have arrived until nearly midnight; so we will fix on midnight to turn the trick, or as soon after as possible. We have decided on this bench, which I have marked with a cross, for the spot. Get its position well fixed in your minds, all of you. It is quite a distance from the house, you see;

few, if any, of the dancers will go so far. It is off the main paths. It is near the street fence, but is hidden from the street by this dense shrubbery behind it. Mrs. Levering has promised Frank the first dance after she arrives. He will then make an engagement with her for another dance, to fall just before midnight, as near as he can figure it, and after dancing with her the second time, he will take her out to this bench.

"Foxy and English will already be in hiding in the shrubbery behind the bench. Foxy has an invitation to the affair, and he will go in evening dress and mix with the guests until he sees Frank dancing with Mrs. Levering the second time. He will then go out of the house and conceal himself in the shrubbery. English will already be waiting there. English must be there by eleven o'clock, to make sure. English wears his ordinary clothes, and slips in by the service entrance to the grounds, marked on the plan here. Once inside the gates he must make his way under cover to the shrubbery behind the bench. English will carry an old overcoat for Foxy, which will be provided. There will be a mask in one side pocket, a cap in the other. As soon as you two meet, Foxy will put on the things.

"Now, as to the actual trick. It is perfectly simple. Frank is keeping Mrs. Levering in conversation on the bench. Foxy sneaks up behind with the nippers, cuts the necklace, and tosses it back to English, who remains in the bushes. The woman will scream, of course. Foxy will stand up and show himself, and run in this direction—that is, toward the house. Frank will take after him for a little way, and then go back to the woman. Foxy will double around this shrubbery, which conceals the stable entrance. As soon as he is out of sight of the woman he will throw off the cap, mask, and coat, and go back to Mrs. Levering as one of the guests attracted by her cries. If she does not cry out, he can mix with the crowd in the house until he has a chance to make a getaway.

"Meanwhile English lies quiet in the shrubbery until the excitement has passed out of the vicinity. Then he slips out by the service gate, the same way he went in. Jim will be waiting with the car about five hundred feet beyond the service entrance, toward town. We have been over the ground. There is a big clump of rhododendrons inside the sidewalk just at that point. English, without stopping, will toss the necklace inside the car; or, if he be pursued, he had better drop it among the rhododendrons. Mind you, English—if there is anybody after you, don't make any throwing motion with your arm! If there is a chase, Jim can join in it, and help English make his getaway. Later he can return and get the diamonds.

"English takes the trolley to Providence, and

the owl train back to New York. Jim secretes the diamonds in the secret pocket in the car, and waits for Foxy. If Foxy is pursued, however, he must not lead them to the car. Jim waits until half past one. If Foxy has not arrived, he takes the car to the Atlantic Garage. You, Jim, ask them to let you sleep in it, as you're expecting a call from your master. Foxy can get the car from the garage any time after that."

Lorina went over all this twice. At the end she consulted her watch.

"If any of you want to have anything explained, speak up. I've got to catch the four-o'clock train back to town."

Frank was the only one who had any objection to the arrangements.

"Look here!" said he. "This will queer me for good with that lot, even if they can't fasten anything on me."

Lorina fixed him with her hard, blue eye.

"How?" she demanded.

"I used to be known as a runner. They'll think it funny I wasn't able to catch Foxy."

"Catch him, then," said Lorina coolly. "Struggle with him. He will throw you off. That will let you out, won't it? Rehearse it now."

A sofa was placed to represent the fateful bench. Lorina and Frank took seats on it. Lorina tied a piece of string around her neck, to represent the necklace. Foxy and I crouched in the rear. Foxy crept forward, snipped the string, and tossed it back to me. His implement was a pair of heavy nail-clippers, such as manicures use. Then, as Foxy made off, Frank flung himself upon him, they struggled, and Frank was thrown to the ground.

All this was gone over again and again. Some buttons were tied on the piece of string, so that it would carry when it was thrown back to me. Foxy's stage experience proved serviceable. He acted as director, showing Frank how to tackle him, and how to fall without hurting himself.

Lorina's depiction of the startled woman was admirable. The whole scene would have been funny if it hadn't been so grim. None of them seemed to be aware of any humor in the proceedings, except myself. Jim, who did not take part in the scene, acted as critic. He stood off, making suggestions.

Finally Lorina announced that it was only ten minutes to train-time, and hustled us out. She said that Frank and Foxy might go off by themselves and practise, if they felt it necessary. We scattered. I returned to the little hotel in Newport where I had taken a room. I have not seen any of them since.

It is now half past nine, and I am waiting in my hotel until it is time for me to go out to Fernhurst. I will post this to you on the way,

so that in case anything happens, you will at least be in full possession of our plans.

I believe I was not cut out for a life of crime. It is too madly exciting. As the hour draws close, my knees show an inclination to knock together, and my teeth to chatter. J. M.

Providence, 1.30 A.M.

When I got to the service gate of Fernhurst, I found it guarded by two men—detectives, unmistakably. This was disconcerting, and I went on past the gate. They bored me through with their gimlet eyes as I passed, and I broke out in a gentle sweat all over. Presently, however, I realized that it was only their professional manner of looking at anybody who was not well dressed, and I calmed down.

It filled me with a kind of terror to think that I might be prevented from carrying out my part of the evening's entertainment, so you will see I was well worked up to it by this time. I went around the block, and prepared to try again. On my way toward the service gate I had the luck to fall in with a crowd of waiters, evidently bound for the show, and it was no trouble at all to mix in with them. My make-up was of the same general style as theirs. We passed through the gate without question.

Once inside, I began to lag behind the bunch, and presently slipped away in the darkness. I reached my specified hiding-place in the shrubbery behind the bench without further adventure. The place had been so carefully mapped that there was no possibility of mistaking it.

I had to wait more than an hour for Foxy. It was not a pleasant time. Lorina's plan seemed perfect, but you never can tell; and my inexperience in this line was such that I didn't feel over-much confidence in myself should an emergency arise.

Not far behind me I could hear the steady procession of motors bringing guests to the party. In the distance I could hear the music. They had picked their spot well. In all that time no one passed my way.

In the end, Foxy's coming gave me a great start. Creeping through the bushes without the rustle of a leaf, he was beside me before I heard him coming. He was dressed in the height of fashion. I caught the gleam of a monocle dangling against his white waistcoat. I silently passed him the coat I had brought, and, standing in a little open space, he put it on, together with the cap and mask.

Then we crouched down side by side under the leaves, with the back of the bench in plain view before us. Foxy laid the nippers on the ground, ready to his hand. We did not speak to each other.

By and by we heard voices approaching, and my poor heart set up a tremendous howdy-do. On the other hand, something told me that Foxy

was enjoying it. Mrs. Levering and the young man called Frank came strolling dimly into view. I was nearly suffocating with excitement.

"This is the place," Frank said.

"How cozy!" she murmured.

"Shall we sit down?" he suggested.

"Let's!" said she. "I'll have a cigarette."

They sat. Frank presently struck a match. If she had looked over her shoulder, she would have seen the glare faintly reflected from our white faces. I stole a look at Foxy's ratlike profile. He ha' shoved up the mask. His teeth were bared. He was amused at the prospect of a little scandalous eavesdropping. Merciful Heavens, what a face!

I need not report the further conversation of the two on the bench. It was merely silly. Frank's voice was trembling. I suppose she ascribed that to the violence of his feelings for her. She is a fool!

Foxy gave them a good while to their talk. Meanwhile I suffered agonies of suspense, and Frank, no doubt, worse. I could at least see when the blow was going to fall, but he could not.

Not until Mrs. Levering said she must go back, not really meaning it yet, did Foxy pull down the mask and creep forward. I held my breath.

It seemed as if it were all accomplished in a single movement. Foxy rose to his knees behind the woman, snipped the shining thing around her neck—and there it was lying at my knees. I mechanically dropped it into my pocket.

She did not scream. In that, at least, she showed blood.

"My necklace!" she gasped, jumping up, her hand to her throat. "Gone!"

In Frank's little choking cry one heard the snapping of the frightful tension he had been under.

Foxy, bent almost double, started up from behind the bench, and headed diagonally across the path. Another gasping cry, not loud, broke from the woman:

"There he is!"

Frank flung himself on the back of the runner, and they rolled over on the ground, all exactly as I had seen it rehearsed in the hotel room. They sprang up, grappled, swayed, and finally Frank was flung with apparent violence to the ground. Foxy disappeared.

Frank struggled to his feet, seemingly hurt. He attempted to stagger in the direction the fugitive had taken, but Mrs. Levering clung to him. One may suppose he was not sorry to be prevented.

At this moment the tragical farce was interrupted by the entrance of an actor not on the bill. This was a man with an electric flash—a detective, to all appearances. I suppose they had them posted about the grounds, and this

man had heard the disturbance, slight though it was. The flash terrified me. I softly and precipitately retired under the leaves into the thickest of the shrubbery.

"I have been robbed!" I heard Mrs. Levering gasp. "My diamond necklace! He came from there. He went that way!"

The detective threw his light around. Fortunately for me, I had put a screen of leaves in front of me. I was not disposed to linger in the neighborhood, however. I ran along close to the fence, where there was a narrow, open space.

As I passed out of hearing, I heard others come running up. Excitement runs like electricity. I had no doubt that Foxy, in immaculate evening dress, was among the first to reach the scene.

I took care to survey the service gate from a discreet distance before presenting myself there. It was well that I did so, for I saw that it was closed, with the two men still on guard. Not knowing at what instant an alarm might be raised behind me, I dared not apply to them with any tale, however ingenious. Those diamonds were red-hot in my pocket.

On the other hand, I should have to retrace my steps nearly a quarter of a mile to reach the main entrance, and I was not suitably dressed to be seen there. I could not climb the fence at any point, for it was a smooth, high, iron affair; moreover, the street outside was brightly lighted. I knew nothing about the cliff side of the grounds.

For a moment or two I felt decidedly panicky. Before my mind's eye head-lines in the next day's newspapers were vividly emblazoned:

WELL-KNOWN JEWELER STEALS THE DIAMONDS
HE SOLD—

or something like that. Finally I recollected that the road to the service entrance of Fernhurst ran quite close to the boundary of the next estate. I determined to try that way.

To reach the boundary I was obliged to make a long détour. Still, there were no sounds behind me to indicate that an alarm had been raised—that is, a public alarm. The line between the two estates was marked by a thorn hedge and a wire fence. Choosing a dark spot, I managed to struggle through without receiving any serious damage. I finally gained the street through the service gate of this place.

This brought me out beyond the point where Jim was to be stationed with the motor-car, and I had to retrace my steps. The car was in the appointed spot. Jim was on the front seat with his head craned in the other direction, whence he expected me to come. As I approached, I gave him a little signal. He was much troubled to see me come from that side, thinking the plan had fallen through; but no doubt he was reassured by the fall of the neck-

lace on the floor of his car. I was thankful to be rid of the cursed thing.

There were several cars standing across the street, with their chauffeurs chatting together, and I was afraid of attracting attention to myself or to Jim by turning back at that moment; so I kept on. I was startled half out of my wits when a motor patrol-wagon full of police came flying up the street past me. It turned in at the service gate of Fernhurst, ahead. Since I was traveling in that direction, I had to keep on.

A man stepped out as I approached. Seizing my shoulder, he swung me half around so that the light fell on my face.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

I thought it was all up with me.

"I just wanted to have a look at the swells," I stammered.

Another man joined him.

"Hold this guy," said the first.

While the second man kept a hand twisted in my collar, the first one frisked me expeditiously. I had taken care, of course, not to have anything on me; but the side pocket of my coat was still hot from the diamonds.

Finding nothing, the man growled an order for my release. The second man spun me around, and propelled me toward town with a shove.

"Get to thunder out of here!" said he.

And I did.

J. M.

New York, July 6, midnight.

I have just returned from a celebration up at Lorina's house. Everybody made a clean getaway last night, and the diamonds are safe in Lorina's desk, so the gang made merry.

The newspaper stories of the affair caused us the greatest amusement. The police, as you have seen, are wide of the mark. Of us all, only Frank has fallen under suspicion. It appears that I was right in my guess as to his identity. The affair will ruin him socially, though it is not likely to lead to his arrest. I can't say that I feel sorry for the youth. Of all the parts in this sordid drama, Frank, the decoy, played the most contemptible.

In the general loosening of tongues to-night, I have some rather interesting matter to report. When I arrived at the house, all the gang except Lorina were in the dining-room. Spencer, the negro, told me she was up in the office, so I went up-stairs to make my report. The office door was open a crack, and as I was about to knock I heard Lorina's voice within. She was talking over the telephone.

The first sound of her voice froze me in astonishment where I stood. The tone was that of a woman distracted by love and longing. Think of it—Lorina Mansfield!

"I'll do anything you tell me," I heard her say. "But I want to see you. I must see you

sometimes, deary! What is the use of all this working and worrying, what am I doing it for, if you never even let me see you? I can't stand it. I can't go on. I *won't* stand it!"

Do you wonder that I was amazed?

There was a silence, and she went on in a broken, humbled tone:

"No; I didn't mean that. I will obey you. You always know best. But don't be so hard on me. Please, deary, *please!*"

At this point Foxy came running up-stairs. I was caught rather awkwardly.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I came up-stairs to report to Mrs. Mansfield," I said, "but I don't like to disturb her. She seems to be having a private conversation."

He listened at the door for a moment, then pulled me away.

"Beat it!" said he. "She's talking to the boss. She'd kill us if she found us here!"

One other thing that I had heard Lorina say was:

"Then I'll keep the coal here, until I hear from you again."

"Coal," or "white coal," is their slang for diamonds, so I suppose she meant the necklace.

I returned down-stairs full of speculations regarding this wonderful and mysterious "boss." What kind of man must he be, thus to bring to her knees the imperious Lorina, who commands us like slaves?

Frank was not present at the party in the dining-room. He is not a regular member of the gang. Besides Foxy, Jumbo, Jim the chauffeur, and myself, there were several of the younger fellows, but not Blondy, I am glad to say, for I should not like to see that nice boy drinking. Lorina appeared only once or twice, and then but for a moment. The lady's gaiety was forced. However, she was liberal in her hospitality. Champagne flowed like water.

Jumbo got very drunk, and even Foxy drank enough to make him indiscreet. It was then that some interesting ancient history was retold. It would astonish you to see Foxy at such moments. There is nothing about him of the dull, prosy bore that he ordinarily affects to be.

Jumbo was toasting him with maudlin praise.

"Drink to Foxy, fellows!" he cried. "There's the lad that brings home the bacon! The slickest, smoothest article of them all!"

Foxy took it as no more than his due.

"Say, Foxy," asked another admirer, "what was the hardest trick you ever turned?"

Naturally, I have to let others ask these questions. Curiosity on my part would be prejudicial to my health. I am on the *qui vive* for the replies, though.

"Oh, six months ago, when I lifted an actress's pearls," drawled Foxy.

Fancy how I picked up my ears!

"Tell us about it," said the same youngster.

All the young ones sit at Foxy's feet, you understand. He was nothing loath.

"Elegant pearls," he said reminiscently; "blue pearls, they call them, though I couldn't see the blue; but fine and choice! It was a long operation. I had to take a job acting in her company a couple of months beforehand. You see, she kept the real pearls in a safe-deposit box, and wore a phony string, which added to our difficulties. First, I had to persuade her to wear the real pearls one night."

"How did you do that?" somebody asked.

"I egged on the leading man to make a bet with her that he could tell the real from the phony."

"Was he in with you?"

"No, indeed! Innocent as a lamb. He didn't know that I put the idea in his mind."

"Foxy is a wonder to manage things!" put in Jumbo.

"After the bet was made, we had the actress trailed every day until she went to the bank and got out her pearls. Then we knew she would wear them that night. She sported them in the first act. In the second she wore a nurse's costume, and had to leave them off. My next job was to get her maid out of the dressing-room during the second act. I managed this by having it gossiped around the company that the star was going to introduce some new business that night, and so the maid went out to look on, see? So I went in her dressing-room—"

"How did you get in?" asked some one.

"Walked straight in, as if I had a good right to. There was no other way. I frisked the room, but could only find one string of pearls, when I had counted on two—the phony and the real. I couldn't tell which was which. I had arranged to have a fellow who was in with us, a pearl expert, call on me between the acts. I saw him at the stage door, and showed him the string I had. He said they were phony; so I had to do it all over. The second time, the luck was with me. The actress's maid, not having seen anything new in the second act, left the dressing-room of her own accord to watch the third act. I went in again. This time I found the real thing in a pocket of the petticoat she had worn in the second act. I left the phony string in its place."

"And they never got on to you?" said his admirer.

"Nah! That was where Enderby came in. He fixed the crime on the young leading man, and broke up the show. Lord, I laughed! It let me out, too. I was sick of the fool business of acting every night. It wasn't till lately that Enderby got it into his head that he'd made a mistake. It's too late now. The pearls have been sold and the swag divided."

Jumbo took a hand in the tale at this point.

"Let me tell you the joke about selling the pearls," said he. "Me and Slim Foley set up an

elegant office on Maiden Lane, with stenographers and office-boys and all, everything swell. We were brokers in precious stones, see? We sent out decoy letters to the leading man Foxy mentioned, and I'm blest if we didn't sell him the string of pearls back again! Then he gave them to the actress, the fool, and she fired him and busted up the company."

"But I don't understand," said the young fellow. "What did you want to sell them to him for? Risky business, I should say."

"Don't ask me," said Jumbo with a shrug. "Orders from higher up."

This suggests a new line of thought, doesn't it?

During one of Lorina's brief visits to the dining-room, she was pleased to commend me for my work last night. She asked me to come to her office to-morrow afternoon as soon as I finished work. I enclose the card she gave me with her address. Subtle irony, eh?

To-morrow night I'll report on what happens there.

J. M.

The card enclosed by Mr. Dunsany read:

THE EARNEST WORKERS PUBLISHING CO.

199 Fifth Avenue

New York

Mrs. Lorina Mansfield, Manager

New York, July 7.

The number on Fifth Avenue given me was not a great distance from Dunsany's, and I was there by 5.15 this afternoon. It is one of the older office-buildings, and is filled with the most respectable tenants, mostly firms engaged in some form of religious business; publishers, mission boards, church supplies, and so forth. It is amusing to think of Lorina Mansfield in such company!

Lorina's office, of course, was no whit less respectable in appearance than a hundred others in the building. There was a respectable elderly stenographer, a subdued office-boy, and Lorina herself playing her part of the saleswoman of religious literature in a starched shirt-waist. She waved me to a seat beside her desk, and started right in to sell me a consignment of tracts. I confess I was a bit dazed by the scene.

At half past five the respectable stenographer and the subdued office-boy asked her humbly if she desired them any further, and, upon receiving a negative, departed.

When the door closed behind them, Lorina yawned, stretched, and swore softly—to take the religious taste out of her mouth, I suppose. I laughed, but she didn't like it. I have discovered that laughter makes these people uneasy.

"Cut it out!" she said, frowning.

I apologized.

"English," she said, "Jumbo told me that

you would be glad to get a little extra work as a diamond expert."

I nodded, wondering what was coming next.

"There's a friend of mine—a jewel-broker—next door," she went on, nodding toward the adjoining room. "His business is so full of risks from thieves, you know, that he decided the best way to fool them would be to take a humble little office in this building, without so much as an extra lock on the door to give warning."

Lorina only handed out this line of talk to save her face. I was not expected to believe it. These people are never frank with one another, even when there's nothing to be gained by bluffing. It is only when the men have been drinking that things are called by their right names.

"My friend needs an assistant, a diamond expert," Lorina continued. "For a couple of months he's been at his wit's end to find a man he could trust. Jumbo said you were just the man for the job, so I recommended you, and my friend told me to bring you around."

I nodded sagely to all this palaver.

"Am I to give up my job at Dunsany's?" I asked, hoping that the answer would be in the affirmative.

"No," she said. "That's a good thing, too. This new job will only take an hour or two in the evenings and on Saturday afternoons."

She arose and tapped in a peculiar way on the door that led into the adjoining office. Some one got up within and unlocked and opened it. Fortunately, as a result of all that has happened during the past few weeks, I have my nerves under strict control, for I got a shock. There stood Frear, the former head of my pearl department!

We were introduced. Frear saw nothing suspicious in my aspect. There was a lot of palaver, with which I will not tire you. The upshot of it was that I was engaged to assist my late assistant at a handsome salary. For the present I was to work from a quarter past five to half past six every evening, as well as Saturday afternoons, and Sunday mornings if necessary.

"I do not like to work late at night," said Frear nervously. "It attracts attention." He undertook then and there to explain my duties. "My work is with the pearls," he said. "The diamond end of the business has been neglected since I lost my last assistant two months ago."

"He died," remarked Lorina, with a peculiar look at me.

I got her meaning.

Against one wall of Frear's office was a large letter-file with drawers that pulled out, and a shutter that could be pulled down over the whole at night, and locked. It was built entirely of steel, as the modern custom is. Frear

pulled out one of the drawers, but instead of letters inside, my amazed eyes beheld a heap of gleaming diamond jewelry. There were necklaces, dog-collars, lavaliers, pins, bracelets, rings.

I wondered if the thirty-odd remaining drawers were filled with like treasures, and made a breathless mental computation of their value—millions! It was a modern burlesque of the scene in *Aladdin's* cave!

Frear, referring to the drawer he held open, said:

"These are consignments of diamonds lately received, which I have not had time to inventory. You see that each article is tagged with a number. You are to take them in numerical order, enter a careful description and valuation in a journal, then demount the stones, weigh them, grade them, and put them in stock."

He opened several other drawers, which contained princely treasures of unset diamonds lying on white cotton. They were carefully graded according to size, color, quality. Here, apparently, is the loot of years past. I could not begin to give any estimate of its value. I have not seen the pearls yet.

"The other part of your work," Frear went on, "will be to fill the orders for diamonds that are received."

He showed me several order-slips. The phraseology showed that they were made out by experienced jewelers, but they bore no shipping directions.

"Am I to send these orders out?" I asked with a simple air.

He shook his head.

"Enter the orders in the order-book, fill them from stock, and turn them over to me."

"Mind you do not carry your work to the window," put in Lorina sharply.

I nodded.

"And mind you do not leave anything about at night," added Frear; "no tools, no papers. The women come in here to clean after we are gone."

He showed me where the tools of my trade were kept. In addition to everything else needful, in a locked cabinet there is a beautiful little electric crucible for melting down gold and platinum. I immediately set to work under the eyes of Lorina and Frear.

You can imagine in what excitement I write this. Our work is done—or almost done, for we have not yet got a line on that mysterious and terrible "boss." For a moment I thought it might be Frear, but he is as subservient to Lorina as the rest.

Man! Man! What a haul we shall make—if there is no slip! We must do our best, of course, to insure complete success, but I beg of you not to risk too far what we have in our grasp, in the hope of getting more. I confess that I am almost frightened by the magnitude

of to-day's developments. Do not wait too long before delivering your blow! J. M.

XXXII

To resume my own part in these matters, you can conceive what a responsibility devolved upon me in the light of these last reports. I did not need to have Mr. Dunsany remind me of it. I was like a player in a close game who holds the best card. The question was when to play it. One may easily hold one's trumps too long. Still, I could not bear to show my hand without the assurance of taking the king—the boss of the gang.

So I still held off, though the tension was frightful, particularly on poor Dunsany. In every subsequent report he begged me to strike, and take our chance of getting our man through the disclosures sure to be made in the general crash. There was more at stake in this game than cards were ever played for!

In the mean time I was straining every nerve to pick up a clue to the boss. I knew that we must get him in the end, if we could hold off long enough. I arranged a meeting with the boy Blondy, and cross-examined him for hours. The poor youngster was only too anxious to tell me what he knew, but he could not help me.

He said that Lorina never sent any of the men to the boss. All communications between them were made without the aid of a third party. Some of the men, he said, believed that the boss was a myth invented by Lorina to keep them in awe. I had good reason in my reports, however, to know that the boss was a real man.

I put the most skilful woman operative I could procure on Lorina's trail. It appeared from her first report that Lorina was instantly aware of being watched, and fooled the operative at her pleasure. Thus she became a danger to me instead of a help, since Lorina, with her infernal cleverness, might easily have found a way to intercept our communications; so I discharged the operative two days after I had hired her.

In justice to Mr. Dunsany, who hourly ran such a terrible risk, I now took the police into my confidence. The chief of the detective bureau at this time was Lanman, a man whom I had always respected for his contempt of spectacular methods and his strong sense. I went to see him.

He did not know me, of course. He listened to my story with an incredulous grin. He has an aspect as grim and forbidding as a granite cliff; but as I piled up my evidence, and read from Mr. Dunsany's reports, I shook the cliff. I had the satisfaction of seeing the granite betray excitement.

When I finished, he was convinced. He was frankly envious of my luck in obtaining such a case, and of my success with it, but he showed a disposition to play absolutely fair. I had been afraid that he might try to rob me of the fruits of my work.

Lanman agreed that it was best to hold off for a day or two longer, in the hope of getting the boss. In the mean time he secured a room at 199 Fifth Avenue, on the same floor where Lorina had her offices, and there every day, during the hours while Mr. Dunsany was at work, waited six men within call.

We next secured quarters in the little hotel three doors from Lorina's house, and every night ten of Lanman's men were domiciled there. Signals were agreed on in case of need.

Matters stood thus at the end of the week which, in its first minutes, had witnessed the Newport robbery. On Friday morning Irma Hamerton came to town again. I witnessed her arrival in the lobby of the Rotterdam, which, you will remember, had been her hotel before it was mine. Every one sat up and stared. She was as lovely as only herself, but I thought she looked harassed. Mount was attending her like a shadow, smoother, more elegant, and more complacent than ever.

With a fanciful, sentimental feeling I had engaged rooms on the same floor of

the hotel as Irma's. Her suite was rented by the year.

During the morning, as I went to and fro in the corridor of the eleventh floor, I could not help but notice an unusual stir in the neighborhood of Irma's rooms. Messengers were flying, packages were arriving, and the switchboard was busy.

There is a telephone switchboard on each floor of the Rotterdam, opposite the elevators. In addition to answering calls, the operator is supposed to keep an eye on things generally. While I was waiting for the elevator, I asked the girl on our floor what was the cause of the excitement. She said she didn't know, but said it with a simper and a toss of the head that added to my uneasiness. Downstairs I asked the clerk, with whom I was on friendly terms, but with no better success.

While I was hanging around the lobby, Irma and Mount came down. They took a taxi at the door. Following a sudden impulse, I engaged the next in line, and ordered the driver to follow them. They led me through the maze of down-town traffic direct to the Municipal Building. They disappeared in the bureau of marriage licenses, and my worst fears were confirmed.

This time I determined to act without consulting my passionate, headstrong friend.

I hastened back to the hotel. I had evidence that the ceremony was to be performed there—most likely the same afternoon. I wrote Irma a note, begging her to see me privately on a matter of the greatest importance. I signed it with my assumed name — Boardman — but I had worded it in such a way that she would know it was from me. Moreover, she knew my handwriting.

I sent the note to her room in advance of her return. There was a chance, of course, that some one else might open it, but I knew she made a general practise of opening her own letters.

A little before two o'clock I got a summons, and hastened to her suite. She

started back dubiously at the sight of me, but I soon identified myself. She was alone. The room was filled with orange-blossoms. The scent sickened me.

"Where is Mr. Mount?" I asked.

"I sent him away for an hour," she answered, blushing.

"Are we quite alone?"

"Bella and Marie are in my bedroom. That is two rooms away."

Bella was Mrs. Bleeker, Marie her maid.

"Laying out your wedding-dress, I suppose?" said I.

She started and blushed deeply.

"You know?" she murmured.

"Is it a secret?"

"Not from you. I didn't know where to reach you by phone."

There was a somewhat painful silence. I did not feel inclined to make things easy for her.

"Aren't you—aren't you going to congratulate me?" she murmured at last.

"No," I said bluntly.

She looked at me full of surprise and pain, like a hurt child; but I was hurt, too, and impenitent.

"Oh, Irma, how can you?" I cried at last.

It was the first time I had ever addressed her so. At the moment neither of us noticed it. My question confused her.

"I—I don't know," was her strange answer. Presently she recovered herself somewhat. "Why shouldn't I?" she demanded, showing fight.

I shrugged.

"I don't know. I have no reasons. You should be guided by your instinct."

"He is good to me," she said defiantly.

"Naturally—he sees his interest."

I can't remember all that was said on both sides. The conversation was sufficiently painful. She was no match for me. Finally she began to tremble.

"Why did you leave me?" she faltered.

"I asked you to help me. You have avoided me all these weeks. I needed

you! It's cruel and useless for you to come now, when it is too late, and—and—"

"I have been working for you!" I cried. "I thought I could trust your instinct."

"I had no intention of marrying at first," she said. "You saw a while ago what was coming. Why didn't you speak then, if you had anything to say? It's too late now!"

"It's never too late if you have a doubt," I told her.

"But he—Alfred will be here at four," she stammered; "and the clergyman—and my friends—"

"Let Alfred go away again," I said coolly.

Her eyes widened like a frightened child's.

"I dare not!" she whispered. "You don't know! He is a terrible man!"

"I'll back you up," I said.

"No! No!" she cried. "I will not! I cannot! Please go!"

I took a new tack.

"Why don't you ask me the result of my work the last few weeks?" I asked.

"What do you mean?"

I had brought, for the purpose, that report of Mr. Dunsany's in which Foxy had told how the theft of Irma's pearls had been accomplished. I explained to Irma how this report had been secured, and then I read it to her. Joy and horror struggled together in her face.

"You knew this long ago!" she cried accusingly. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Roland forbade it. I am breaking my word to him in telling you now."

"He no longer cares, then, what I think!"

I shrugged. She walked up and down the room like one distraught.

"Knowing that Roland is innocent, would you dare to marry Mount?" I asked.

"It is too late!" she cried.

At this moment we were warned by a sound in the next room to pull ourselves

together. The door opened, and Mrs. Bleecker's fawning countenance appeared in the opening.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said, cringing. "I didn't know you were still engaged."

She did not withdraw, however, but favored me with a good, long stare. I never saw the gentle Irma so angry.

"Leave the room!" she commanded. "I told you I was not to be disturbed!"

If she had always taken the same tone with that woman, it would have been better for her. Mrs. Bleecker precipitately retired. Irma continued to pace the floor.

"What shall I do?" she murmured, twisting her hands together. "I have not the strength to face him out!"

"Don't try," I suggested.

"What do you mean?"

"Beat it!" I said in homely slang.

A gleam of light, of mischief, appeared in her tortured face.

"But how—where? Will you go with me?" she cried breathlessly. "What shall I do about the women here? What explanation can I make?"

"One thing at a time!" I protested. "Make no explanation. You are your own mistress. If you like, you can leave Alfred a note, saying that you have changed your mind. As to the women—"

"I can trust Marie."

"Very well! Send Mrs. Bleecker out on an errand. No trouble to invent an errand at this juncture. You can be gone when she returns."

"Will you come with me?"

I shook my head.

"Matters are rapidly approaching a crisis," I said. "I must stay on the job."

"But where shall I go?"

"That's up to you. I can only offer a suggestion."

"Yes! Yes! Don't tease me!"

"You have a difficult time ahead of you. I think you need a man's support."

A crimson tide swept up from her neck.

"I would put on my oldest and plainest suit," I went on wickedly, "and regis-

ter at some quiet little hotel, the last place where they would think of looking for you. I will give you the name of such a place. At half past five o'clock this afternoon I would go to a certain cheap little restaurant known as the American Café, which is on Third Avenue, near Sixteenth Street—half past five, remember—and just see what happens."

"If you would only come with me—I mean as far as the door!" she murmured in confusion.

"Too risky," I said. "Mind, I do not guarantee anything in any event. It's up to you. A certain young friend of ours has the pride of Lucifer, and you have made a ghastly wound in it. You will have to humble yourself shockingly."

In her present mood, I saw that she was quite ready to do so.

"This is what I'm counting on," I went on. "Pride is pretty poor fare. Let him act as high and mighty as he likes, he's really starving for all that makes life worth living. The unexpected sight of you ought to be like a feast to his eyes. I'm hoping he'll fall before his confounded pride has a chance to bring up reserves. One thing more—if anything prevents him from supping there as usual, he lives at No. 192 East Seventeenth Street."

"Are you sure he loves me still?" she whispered.

"Not at all sure," I said coolly. "You'll have to go and find out. If you've lost him, you've lost a lover that was worth a woman's while!"

XXXIII

AFTER I had seen Irma safely out of the Rotterdam—I thought she looked more adorable in her plain black dress and modest hat than in all her finery—I went back to my own rooms in the hotel. I was expecting a telephone report from a man whom I had sent to pick up what he could at the garage where Lorina stored her car.

Meanwhile I gave myself up to the joy of picturing Mrs. Bleecker's dismay when

she returned from her hypothetical errand, and Mount's black rage when he dropped in at four to be married and found himself minus a bride. I had always suspected that Mount concealed tigerish tendencies under his too smooth exterior.

By and by my telephone did ring, but it was not the man I expected. An agitated young voice hailed me over the wire, which I had some difficulty in recognizing as Blondy's. He was so excited that at first I could not make head or tail of his message. When I got him straightened out, it ran something like this:

"I have just been at Mrs. Mansfield's office—I mean the down-town office. She told me last night to come to-day, as she had a package to be taken to a man at the Hotel Madagascar. I was sitting beside her desk, and she was writing a letter to go with the package, when the telephone-bell rang. She knows how to talk over the telephone without giving anything away. All she said was 'Yes' and 'No' and 'Repeat that'; but I saw that it was important, because her face changed and her eyes glittered. When she looks like that it means danger.

"She was talking to a woman called Bella, and she made some notes on a pad. As soon as she rang off, she jumped up. She said she was called out, and told me I needn't wait, because she wouldn't send the package until to-morrow. When she turned to get her hat, I managed to catch a glimpse of the notes she had put down. She had written, as near as I can remember:

"Elegantly dressed man of fifty—silvery toupee, waxed mustache, pale face—brown suit, waistcoat edged with white—white spats, white gloves—expensive Panama hat, fancy band, green and red—Room 1104."

"That is your description, and that is the number of your room. I was scared when I saw the expression of her face. She sent me home. She left at the same time, and took a taxi at the door. She carries her gun in a kind of pocket in her skirt. Look out for her!"

"I get you, my boy!" I cried. "You've done me a good turn, and I sha'n't forget it. Don't you worry!"

I hung up the receiver, and did a little thinking. I was struck by the name of the woman who had called Lorina up—Bella. It is not a very common name. It was Mrs. Bleecker's name. Was this a new thread in my extraordinary tangle?

It was decidedly awkward to have my disguise laid bare just at this moment. However, forewarned is forearmed.

I set about putting my affairs in order. I did not know whether Lorina would visit the Rotterdam or not, but I was sure she would not do so without making her usual careful arrangements, and probably not without disguising herself—all of which would take time. I gave myself an hour, at least.

I gathered my papers together, and despatched those that I valued to Dr. Jenkins, who had been so good to me already. I wrote notes to Mr. Dunsany, Blondy, and other agents, instructing them to send their reports in the care of Oscar Nilson until they heard from me again. My beautiful sartorial collection I had to leave behind me. Perhaps I could redeem it later, if it was not sold by the hotel to pay my bill.

It was close upon four o'clock, and I supposed the wedding-guests were gathering, when my telephone summoned me again.

"Miss Sadie Farrell is calling," said the voice at the other end.

My heart jumped, but simultaneously caution held up a warning finger.

"One moment!" I answered.

I did some rapid thinking. I did not keep the girl waiting an appreciable moment, but in that time I thought a whole chapter, as one may do in a crisis.

Not Sadie! Better sense instantly told me that she would never come to my hotel. She had a more exalted notion of what was due her. Lorina, of course! She had used the most obvious expedient of reaching my rooms. I had three alternatives:

First, to deny myself to her. But in that case I should virtually be besieged in the hotel.

Second, to see her down-stairs. She would hardly take a shot at me in the crowded lobby; but she might very well have some half-crazed youth there to do it for her.

Third, to have her up-stairs, where she could not pass any signals outside. I had two rooms, and—

"Please have Miss Farrell come up-stairs," I said over the phone.

I had one of the best suites at the Rotterdam—a corner room, which was my parlor, and a bedroom. I put the key of the parlor door in my pocket, retired into the bedroom, and locked the communicating door. Presently I heard the bell-boy's knock on the parlor door.

"Come in!" I sang out.

Through the door I heard the sounds of two people entering my parlor.

"Hello, Sadie!" I cried. "Make yourself at home! I'll be dressed in a jiffy!"

An indistinguishable murmur answered me. It was certain that the visitor was not my Sadie.

The bell-boy went out, and I heard him retiring down the hall. I gave him time to get out of the way; then I slipped out of the bedroom into the hall, with

the key of the other room in my hand. I inserted it ever so softly in the parlor door, and turned it.

But she heard! She rushed to the door and shook it. By that time I was around the corner of the corridor.

The telephone-girl looked at me somewhat curiously as I pressed the elevator-button, but she did not quite like to question me. She knew, of course, that a caller had just been shown into my room.

"I'll be back in a minute," I said carelessly.

Just then I saw the number of my room—1104—displayed on the switchboard. Lorina had rushed to the phone.

"Is there a drug-store in the hotel?" I asked the girl at random, to distract her attention.

"No, sir. There is one opposite the Thirty-Fourth Street entrance."

The elevator was approaching my floor. I needed one more second to make my getaway.

"Is it a reliable place?" I asked.

"Conway's," she said, holding the plug ready in her hand. "One of the largest in town."

The elevator door was now open, and I stepped aboard. The operator shoved the plug in and answered the call just as I was carried down.

(To be concluded in the January number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

A LOVE SONG

I AM trying to think you are thinking of me,
Out there across all this land and this sea,
Out in a world of men eager for flowers,
Eager to eat all that honey of ours.

Ah, love, keep it secret and sacred for me,
Across all this land, and across all that sea;
Till we meet, till we meet,
Most sacred, most sweet,
Dear hands to dear feet—
Ah, honey and myrrin
Of the body of her!—
Till all my life lies
'Neath the heaven of your eyes,
And together we eat
All that honeycomb sweet!

Richard Le Gallienne

Light Verse

HOW DEAR TO MY HEART!

I CAME back to Homeville as proud as could be, and hung out my shingle—"WILL CARVEM, M.D." The people had known me from babyhood up, and all my forebears since old Heck was a pup. Just fresh out of college, with gas in my head—

"Smooth slipping in Homeville! They know me," I said.

I met Judge De Vorcem the first day in town, and on my right shoulder his welcome came down.

"Fine, Willie! I'm glad that you've located here; the people all know you, your sailing is clear."

He asked me to dinner next day at his home, but took his bad liver to Dr. Delome!

Then Stingem, the merchant, with taffy galore, came racing to greet me the length of his store.

"Great, Willie!" he said with a fatherly grin. "They know you in Homeville, and, sonny, you'll win!"

He took me to luncheon—'twas all very nice—but sought other medics when needing advice.

The mothers all smiled that I met on the street, and all asked me out to their houses to eat. They flattered my uncles, inquired of my aunts—but that never bought me a new pair of pants. I was "Willied," and "sonnied," and loved, and caressed, and foddered, and fattened, and fed on the best; but my neat little office at 23 Main kept flapping its fresh-painted shingle in vain.

At last I grew weary of blessings and smiles, and shifted my shingle some three thousand miles. I left in the gloaming, and burned every bridge; I've not a relation this side of the "ridge"! Ah, scenes of my childhood, I wish you the best! I'm earning a good living out in the West!

J. Edward Tufft

THE ECLIPSE

WE sat upon the ivied porch—
A charming place to spoon—
And waited for the earth to throw
Its shadow on the moon.

When terra firma's edge began
To dim the silver shine,

She slipped her dainty little hand
Confidingly in mine.

When half across the lunar disk
Earth's silhouette was traced,
My arm stole out and tenderly
Her slender form embraced;
And when the moon was blotted out,
Behold, it was her lips,
All dewy-red and honey-sweet,
That suffered an eclipse!

Grant Paulding

THE REAL GIRL

WHEN she is lost in the crowd to me,
Oh, nobody knows
How proud she can be! She's not proud to me
Under the rose!

Her whole sweet heart she reveals to me;
And nobody knows
How she steals, when free, how she steals to me
Under the rose!

Where the world can see she is blind to me;
And nobody knows
How kind she can be, how kind to me,
Under the rose!

Stokely S. Fisher

THE TECHNICAL SERVICE

"I SUPPOSE you have a delicious time,"
Said a damsel bedecked all daintily
To a being terrible, tall, sublime—
A subaltern of artillery.

He wore a tired and a twisted smile
As he gazed at eyes of entrancing blue,
At furbelows of to-morrow's style,
At the tip of a small, distracting shoe.

He answered "Yes," but in silent grief
He named the parts of the modern gun
From the washers, thin as a poplar-leaf,
To the breach-block, weighing about a ton.

He answered "Yes," but the small-arms drill
And the regulations were in his mind,

And how to "lay" on the side of a hill,
And how to build an effective "blind."

He answered "Yes," but the formulæ
Of gunnery physics dulled his eye—
The root of the angle T—O—G,
The cube of x and the square of y .

And the being terrible, tall, sublime—
The subaltern of artillery—
Said: "Yes, I have a delicious time
With a damsel decked all daintily!"

J. E. Middleton

THE ETERNAL FEMININE

PATRICIA is a modern maid,
Nor lets tradition's bonds enthrall her;
Of man and motor unafraid,
She domineers o'er car and caller.
But, try her hardest not to quail,
A mouse still turns Patricia pale!

She sings in French and German, too,
Reads Dante in the Tuscan version,
In Esperanto can construe—
Perhaps she knows a little Persian;
But let her meet a helpless child—
Her baby-talk will drive you wild!

A proper sportsman, through and through,
Athletic contests find her ready;
In golf her drive is hard and true,
Her stroke in tennis swift and steady.
One failing I commiserate—
She cannot drive a tack in straight!

I sought Patricia's hand one night;
No blushes came, no sidelong glances.
I gasped to find my jewel quite
Unparalleled in love's romances.
Then Mother Eve spoke, prompt and clear—
"Oh, John, this is so sudden, dear!"

M. K. Powers

PUNISHMENT

'TWIXT dances, as with Nell I sat,
In curtained alcove by the stair,
Her beauty so bewitched me that
I boldly kissed her, then and there.

Alas, right quickly did I rue
My rashness, for with scornful glance
She cried: "For *that* I'll punish you!
You shall not have the coming dance!"

"But, Nell, I thought it not amiss!
It seemed the proper place—and time;
Such punishment for one small kiss
Seems scarcely suited to the crime!"

Half shyly then she looked at me—
Her lips of dew and roses blent.
"Suppose, then, that you make," said she,
"The crime to fit the punishment!"
Clarence Mansfield Lindsay

THE METROPOLIS

NEW YORK—it is a chary town,
A canny and a wary town,
But still a very merry town to those who love
it well;
A noisy town, a blary town,
A cruel, a contrary town,
And yet an airy, fairy town which casts a magic
spell.

New York—it is a funny town,
A sad, a dark, a sunny town,
A simply mad for money town—or so the cynics
cry;
A place of greed and charity,
Of famine and prosperity,
Where life moves with celerity, though no one
figures why.

New York—it is a gritty town,
A dull town and a witty town,
An ugly and a pretty town, a dreary town and
gay;
It's quiet and it's clamorous,
It's practical and glamorous,
It's loveless and it's amorous—it's anything you
say!

New York—a most capricious town,
A godly and a vicious town,
A true and meretricious town, a town of peace
and strife,
Of sober worth and vanity,
Of rudeness and urbanity,
As varied as humanity—illogical as life!

Berton Braley

THE AVIATRIX

BETTINA dearly loves to fly
A great big aeroplane,
Soar out of sight, descend, alight,
Then do it o'er again.
She likes to turn a somersault
With nothing underneath,
And frolic in the sky as if
Upon her native heath.

In knickers and a leather hood
She looks so sweet and slight,
My foolish heart goes pitapat
Each time she makes a flight.
And yet, alas, I dare not hope
That she will ever love me,
Because this soaring maiden is
So very far above me!

Minna Irving



Mr. Tice's Embezzlement

by Clarence Meily

AS the judge reached the closing sentences of his decision he straightened his portly form above his desk and glowered significantly in the direction of Mr. Tice.

"The practise," he read, "of coaching witnesses in their own interests rather than in the interest of the truth is one of which no reputable attorney would be guilty. I trust I shall not have to speak of this again in this court. Judgment will go for the plaintiff."

He removed his nose-glasses and turned toward the bailiff.

"Adjourn court till to-morrow at ten o'clock, Mr. Bailiff," he said.

The bailiff droned the announcement, and there followed the slight stir and bustle which preceded the departure of the small audience.

Mr. Tice gathered up his papers with affected nonchalance. He was quite aware that lawyers to the right and left of him rose, exchanged greetings and friendly banter, and moved down the aisle toward the door without noticing or including him. He was aware that the court attachés ignored him. He was aware that

some of the attendant strangers stared at him curiously.

He was not unaccustomed to such subtle ostracism, though this evening, after what the judge had said, it was more marked than usual. Yet, though he preserved his air of indifference and pert bravado, the heart of little Mr. Tice was very, very bitter.

It was not merely that he had lost his case. He accepted that as one of the familiar buffetings of the ill luck to which he had become callous. Nor was it the judge's censure, or the cautiously veiled contempt of his associates, or the insolent surprise of those who did not know him. It was all of these, in monotonous combination. It was the use and wont of them, the staleness and dreariness of them, the disgust and hopelessness of them. It was failure.

He tried to be the last to leave the room, but in the corridor, just beyond the door, he was compelled to sidle past the judge and the railroad attorney, Parsons, pausing for a moment's interchange of gossip and cigars. The sleeve of his shabby overcoat brushed the furry lining

of Parsons's sumptuous garment. He knew intuitively the glance of humorous disdain the attorney gave him, even as his ear caught the murmured words "shyster" and "most reprehensible"—this latter from the judge.

He scuttled down the corridor, the oily, acrid rancor within him rising till it almost choked him. How bitterly he hated these sleek, pompous, fatted darlings of fortune!

"Shyster," was he? And his conduct "most reprehensible"? What did they know of the long, losing fight, the hazards, the defeats, the expedients, the more and more dubious shifts, of those who slip slowly, remorselessly toward the edge of the abyss? Give him Parsons's twenty-five or thirty thousand a year and he would show them such a career of resplendent uprightness as would make them blink. The Pharisees and hypocrites! Faugh!

Mr. Tice spat viciously into the gutter, for by this time he had reached the street. He pulled his collar up against the keen wind and hurried through the alternate flare and gloom of the twilight streets to his office. Snapping on the electric lights, he gazed morosely around the dismal little room, with its solitary bookcase half filled with ancient volumes, its battered desk, and its cold radiator. Finally he slumped into his office chair and stared at the blank window.

There was nothing to do, no place to go save his still more dreary boarding-house—save, also, the saloon, against the lure of which he fought desperately. Evil and malignant thoughts were closing round him when their spell was beneficently broken by the rattle of the telephone-bell. Mr. Tice raised the receiver to his ear and growled:

"Hello!"

He recognized the voice that answered as that of Dr. Trotter, a physician whose professional standing was about on a parity with his own.

"Hello! That you, Tice?"

"Yes, it's Tice."

"Say, Tice, I'm down here at the Logan Hotel. I've got a patient down here, and he's pretty sick, about all in. He wants to see a lawyer. Thinks he's got a case of some kind against somebody. He's a bum, but he says he has wealthy connections. There may be something in it, and there may not. You might come down and talk to him."

"All right, I'll come down," Mr. Tice assented grudgingly.

Anything was better than sitting in that chill and wretched office!

He knew the obscure and dilapidated hostelry called the Logan Hotel, as he knew most of the dingy byways of the city. A few minutes' walk brought him to the place, and to a back bedroom on an upper floor, where Dr. Trotter answered his knock upon the door.

"Sure, come in," the doctor greeted him. "I guess he ain't so dippy but you can make out what he wants."

The lawyer entered the bare, musty room and advanced to the bed where lay the patient. He was a man of about forty, pallid, and unbelievably emaciated, the gaunt eyes, from which the flesh had shrunk, being the most prominent feature of his face. At intervals his skeletonlike form twitched convulsively, and his roving stare endlessly swept the ceiling and walls of the room with the tormented energy of half-delirium.

"Here's the lawyer you wanted," said Trotter, as they stood by the bed.

The man's restless gaze fastened on Mr. Tice. He made a spasmodic effort to raise himself, and fell back futilely.

"Say, I got a case for you, judge," he broke out. "My name is Brenner—Charles Augustus Brenner. That's my real name. My father lived in this town. He was a rich man, one of the big men here, and I didn't know he was dead till a week ago. That's why I couldn't protect my rights. I've never had a cent of my inheritance. Not a cent! They've robbed me of it and kept me in ignorance all these years; and now I'm dying here like a dog, and me a millionaire if I had

my rights! I want you to get it for me, judge. I've got the papers to prove who I am. My sister's robbed me all these years—robbed me and cast me off!"

His words trailed off into delirious mutterings, and he became oblivious of their presence.

"What's the matter with him?" Tice asked.

"Booze, mainly," returned the doctor. "He's developing some kind of fever, but I doubt if he lives long enough for me to make a diagnosis. He's got a bundle of papers here—letters and things. Want to see 'em?"

Tice nodded. Trotter took from a bureau drawer a packet of papers and handed them to him. The lawyer glanced at them and dropped them into his pocket.

"There was a Peter Brenner here, an old fellow who died a dozen years or so ago," Trotter said. "He owned that property where the steel-works stands, I remember. I guess he was pretty well heeled. I don't know whether this man is his son or not. He might be, you know."

"I'll look into it," Tice promised.

II

MR. TICE spent the next couple of days looking into it. It gave him a comfortable sense of being busy, and enabled him to baffle his landlord by a written placard upon his office door bearing the words, "At court-house." He had scant hope that the investigation would develop anything of profit; yet, as he delved among the dusty records and papers yellow with age, he began to discover some facts of curious interest.

There had indeed been a Peter Brenner, who had died some fifteen years before, leaving as his heirs two children, a son and daughter. The estate had consisted of little else but the realty mentioned by Trotter, which had been appraised at forty thousand dollars; and a partition suit had been brought to divide the property between the heirs.

Mr. Tice pricked up his ears as he saw

that the attorney in this proceeding had been Parsons, the railroad lawyer. He whistled a low note of surprise when he saw, further, that Parsons had assumed to represent the son, Charles Augustus Brenner, as plaintiff, and that the daughter had been made defendant. It presently appeared that the land had been sold, and that Charles's half of the proceeds had been receipted for on the court records by Parsons.

Probably, Mr. Tice told himself, it was all right. He did not seriously believe that Parsons had been guilty of any chicanery. Still, if it should turn out that Parsons had pretended to act for young Brenner without the latter's knowledge or authorization, and if young Brenner's share of the patrimony had been paid over to his sister, or retained by Parsons himself, or otherwise improperly disposed of, Mr. Tice saw possibilities so roseate that they filled him with silent, malicious laughter.

You never could tell. Crookedness did exist in high places, if only you could uncover it; and in uncovering crookedness on the part of this puffed-up, porcine hypocrite, Parsons, Mr. Tice felt that he could bring to bear not only skill, but measureless enthusiasm.

The next morning he visited his client again. In the morning hours he found him quieter, saner, more self-possessed; and the man reiterated his story with an emphasis and wealth of detail that went far toward convincing Mr. Tice that he was telling the truth. He readily signed an affidavit to the effect that he did not know Parsons, had never employed him as an attorney, and had never received a penny from his father's estate.

Armed with this document, Mr. Tice felt that he might undertake a cautious questioning of Parsons himself.

In the spacious offices of the railroad lawyer, Mr. Tice sat cooling his heels for an hour. About him, with the smooth, noiseless efficiency of a high-powered machine, flowed the life of the office. Typewriters clicked, spruce clerks came and

went, all was clean, glittering, prosperous, subtly condescending. Even the leather chair in which he sat seemed to patronize him, and the doors which opened and closed intermittently on either hand, to snub him.

But Mr. Tice endured the environment and the long, rather humiliating delay with complacency, sustained by a kind of anarchistic glee. In his pocket was a paper, Brenner's affidavit, which like a dynamite bomb might blow this fabric of bumptious success to nothingness and make even its salvage not worth while. It was a delicious revenge, and Mr. Tice savored it critically, with secret gusto and many embroideries of fancy.

So the hour passed cheerfully. At length, toward noon, an office-boy who looked like an embryo bank president paused before him and said:

"Mr. Parsons will see you now."

And Mr. Tice followed the youth into the inner sanctum.

"Good morning, Parsons," said Mr. Tice.

Parsons glanced up from the papers upon his desk, but did not return the greeting. He surveyed Mr. Tice negligently, as if the little man's presence there were a mistake of some sort which would speedily be rectified. Mr. Tice helped himself, unasked, to a seat, and put his question:

"You remember the estate of Peter Brenner, Parsons?"

Mr. Parsons's apparent preoccupation vanished. He did not change his posture, nor did the expression of his face alter, yet somehow he was alert, concerned, even on guard. Tice noticed this. After a moment's pause, Parsons said:

"Yes, I remember it."

"You represented one of the heirs—the old man's son—in a partition suit."

Again a pause.

"Yes," said Parsons.

"The property in that case was sold to the steel-works for thirty-five thousand dollars."

"I believe so."

"Your client's share was paid over to you. Your receipt for it is on file."

No reply.

"Young Mr. Brenner is here in town."

Tice's keen little eyes had been playing over his antagonist's face and figure, searching for the emotional betrayal that would confirm his suspicions and cherished hopes. Now he caught it. Parsons's big, beautifully kept hand was clenched upon the arm of his chair with a force to crumble the wood. There was no other sign, not the paling of a lip or the twitch of an eyelid, but this was enough. Tice mentally hugged himself with joy.

"Your appearance in that case was unauthorized by your client, Parsons," he said. "But we will not go into that now. The purpose of my present call is to demand the payment of the seventeen thousand five hundred dollars belonging to Brenner which you have kept."

At this direct accusation Parsons's tremendous composure burst like an overstrained dam, and the flood of his fear and fury surged through him unrestrained. His face twitched, his eyes became bloodshot, his great teeth gritted and ground together.

"You infamous little rat!" he thundered. "Have you the insufferable impudence to come here and charge me to my face with unprofessional conduct? Get out of my office before I call the janitor and have you kicked out!"

"Don't get excited, Parsons," grinned Mr. Tice, now confident master of the situation. "You don't really intend to hold that money, you know. You've got too much at stake—position, reputation, all this." He waved his hand. "Better come across and avoid trouble. I don't need to instruct you on the law of embezzlement."

Parsons, who at the top of his outburst had immediately realized its tactical error, was striving for, and rapidly achieving, a return to self-control.

"The money was paid over to Brenner at the time of the sale," he panted heav-

ily. "I had his written authorization to appear for him in the suit, and I have his receipt for the money."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mr. Tice easily. "And where, may I ask, are these important documents?"

"They have been mislaid," snarled Parsons. "Do you suppose there's a court in Christendom that wouldn't take my word against that of that worthless, wandering alcoholic Brenner?"

"Where did you pay over the money to your client? In this city?"

"Of course."

Mr. Tice laughed.

"Parsons," he said, "Charles Brenner was not in this city when that property was sold, nor for years before, nor for years after. You don't know where he was; *but I do know*. Go on the witness-stand and tell your story with all the necessary details of time and place; and when you get through, I will prove that you are a liar!"

Mr. Tice rose and smiled with condescension upon his adversary. Parsons was lying back in his chair, his face blotched, his eyes half closed, a fine sweat covering his forehead.

"I will return at this hour to-morrow," said Mr. Tice, "and receive your check. Make it payable to my order, as my fees in this matter are contingent. This is a formal demand for the money. We will not discuss such unpleasant things as consequences, unless you fail to come through to-morrow."

And very jauntily, very well pleased with himself, he strutted to the door.

III

MR. TICE continued to strut along the street, his hat at a slightly rakish angle, a good cigar—possibly a premature extravagance—between his teeth, a warm sense of power and triumph in his veins that went far toward offsetting the chill flurries of snow eddying about him. He held Parsons between his thumb and finger, and the consciousness of it was delectable.

As he entered his office, the telephone jangled. Mr. Tice raised the receiver to his ear and said:

"Hello!"

It was the voice of Dr. Trotter that answered.

"That you, Tice? Say, you know that fellow Brenner?"

"Yes," said Mr. Tice sharply. "What about him?"

"Why, he's dead."

"Dead!"

"Went out quick, like I told you he might—along about ten o'clock this morning, shortly after you left him. Thought you'd like to know."

Mr. Tice laid down the receiver. He was startled, yet, on second thought, not greatly discomposed by the news. He had not practised law, after his peculiar methods, for thirty years without learning to meet an emergency.

He spent the rest of the afternoon copying and recopying the signature of Charles A. Brenner as attached to the affidavit which he held, and by evening he had enabled himself to achieve a fair duplication of it. He then prepared a receipt and release for Parsons, for the money he expected to receive, and duly subjoined thereto the imitated signature. He was thus ready for the meeting on the morrow.

When Mr. Tice called the next day at the railroad attorney's offices, there was for him no more cooling of heels in an anteroom, waiting his host's pleasure. Instead, he marched with serene assurance into Parsons's private room, and no one said him nay. Moreover, it was a changed Parsons that he found there—grave, composed, a little pale, perhaps, and with a subtle alteration of demeanor that made him democratic, almost companionable.

"Sit down, Mr. Tice," Parsons said. "Here is the check you asked for. Have you a receipt?"

Wonderingly, Mr. Tice took the check and passed over the receipt he had concocted. He cleared his throat as if to

speaking, thought better of it, and remained silent. Parsons, with his hand on the receipt, continued:

"In order that I may look upon this transaction in later years with some degree of satisfaction, as well as because of my attitude toward it yesterday, I would deem it a favor if you would listen to an explanation, or, if you prefer, a confession. Fifteen years ago, when this Brenner partition suit was brought to me by the old man's daughter, Charles's sister, I was just at the outset of my practise. There were hardly any clients, and I was desperately poor. Besides, my wife was ill, and only a long sojourn in a warmer climate held out any hope of recovery for her. I was almost on the point of abandoning the effort to become a lawyer. I was told that I could have this case if I could close up the whole matter in thirty days. Charles's sister was about to make a wealthy marriage, and she was in great haste to realize her share of the property.

"Well, to make Charles a defendant and secure service on him by publication would take weeks, perhaps months. The delay was prohibitive. In my need I dared not refuse the business, so I adopted the expedient of making Charles the plaintiff, undertaking to represent him as his attorney. I made the sister the defendant, and had her enter a voluntary appearance. In this way I could meet her requirement of a prompt sale of the property. Of course, when the property was sold, Charles's share was paid over to me. Probably you cannot realize what that meant to me."

"Yes," said Mr. Tice, speaking very suddenly, "you bet I can!"

"I didn't know where Charles was," the other went on. "No one knew. The money in my hands meant health for my wife and professional salvation for myself. It meant that I could hang on, could win out. Well, I used it as my own. It was a breach of trust, criminal, perhaps, but it saved her life and it enabled me to accomplish what I have.

Aside from that, I have always been an honorable attorney. I wanted you to understand."

IV

MR. TICE nervously crossed and recrossed his legs. He seemed embarrassed; and yet there was a genial glow of sympathy about his heart such as he had not known for years.

"I know," he said. "I know. Necessity drives us to strange expedients sometimes; but I didn't imagine that you had ever been through the mill like that."

Parsons smiled half sadly, half whimsically.

"You have the truth," he said.

"I will keep it an inviolable confidence," Mr. Tice promised. "There will be no comeback."

"There is another thing," Parsons went on, speaking hesitatingly, almost humbly. "In the past I may have been harsh in my judgment of you, Mr. Tice. I would like to ask you to overlook it. I may have misjudged you."

"Probably not." Mr. Tice laughed and blushed. "Anyway, I never treasure up those things. I guess I'll be going, now."

He rose, and Parsons walked with him to the door. There, as a final test of fellowship and equality, little Mr. Tice held out his hand, and Parsons took it in his big, warm clasp.

Mr. Tice descended to the street, a queer softness nestling about his heart. He was no longer an Ishmaelite, his hand against every man. On the contrary, the fellowship of his kind seemed freshly opened to him. He felt a curious longing for contact with human beings. He wanted, almost, to befriend some one.

The storm of the day before had given place to a clear cold, through which the sunlight fell with a fallacious sheen. In his unwonted mood of gentleness Mr. Tice noticed things he had not noticed for many years. He saw, for instance, that the markets were gay with holly and mistletoe and young fir-trees, and that

show-windows were ablaze with toys. There was an elation, too, about the hurrying crowds, a kind of electric anticipation, as of something joyous and sweet. Even the saloons he passed were full of careless roisterers.

Mr. Tice paused an instant here, but presently went on. He still had much to think of, something weighty to decide. He must keep a clear head. He did, however, allow himself an unusually generous luncheon, listening the while to an orchestra's strident merriment. He could scarcely remember when he had listened to music before. Afterward he went to his dingy little office.

The late Charles Augustus Brenner had had a sister who had contracted a rich marriage. This woman was undoubtedly her brother's heir. The check in Mr. Tice's pocket belonged legally to her. That was the outstanding feature of the situation which presented itself. But the woman did not know of this money. Parsons, his conscience purged, would not be likely to keep track of it. Even Dr. Trotter did not know of it. No one knew of it but himself.

Mr. Tice marshaled these facts for contemplation while he sat at his desk, his lean little fingers tapping its battered surface, his gaze meditatively fixed on the window and the irregular plateaus of snowy roofs outside, which gave back to the sky its chill, crystal light. If any conclusion from them lurked in the back of his mind he did not formulate it—not yet.

Instead, he amused himself by picturing in fancy this woman, vain, selfish, overdressed, overfed, extravagant, mean, clamorous about her petty interests, the sort of woman he most detested. He could imagine her greedy clutch for the money.

Suddenly it occurred to Mr. Tice that he had not examined the packet of papers which Trotter had handed him on the evening of his first visit to the patient. They might disclose additional facts, perchance important ones. He got

them and spread them out before him on the desk.

They consisted almost wholly of letters. There were two or three of a business character, not now significant; a note from the dead man's sister, curtly refusing a request for money; and others from a young woman. It was these last that caught Tice's attention. He ran through them hastily, then arranged them in chronological order for a more careful reading.

They disclosed the record—old, and to Tice's world-worn mind even humdrum—of a dishonored love. Yet there was a quality in the letters that lifted the story above the plane of sordid intrigue. There had been no marriage, but, it seemed, there was a child. The first of the letters were pleas for the performance of a marriage ceremony to legalize the status of this baby. The girl wrote:

I have looked to pride to save me, but how can I balance pride against my baby's future? I want him to have his fair chance, and it is not fair that he should have this handicap of the world's derision. You do not owe me anything, and if you did I would not take it from you; but you do owe your son a name. I think there is no infamy so deep as that of a father who puts the load of his own shame upon the tiny shoulders of his child.

And again:

If you could see him, Charles—see his delicious, trustful smile, and feel his soft little fingers groping for your own—I think even your stony heart would be touched and softened. He discovered his rosy little feet yesterday, and the wonder of it quite overcame us both. Every day brings its growth, and some fresh realization of this strange world in which he is so forlorn a guest. And when I think of the life bound up in his tiny body, the capacities for every manner of good and ill, the sacred hopes upon which the future hangs, I am frightened until I am ready to beg anything even of you. How can you let him go out into the world, which has so many rough paths and cruel pitfalls for little feet, unguarded and alone?

The last letters were unaffected appeals for money.

The burden is too heavy. I cannot carry it. The world is hard and merciless, and its virtue is more terrible than its sins. I thought I had

known every humiliation, but I cannot let my baby starve. After all, he has the right to ask this of you. There is no brute so dull, so selfish, that it does not care for its young. And if life will let him, my baby will grow up to be both a good and a great man.

Mr. Tice laid down the letters, smiling a little at this last expression of maternal faith. After all, they made no difference. There had been no marriage. Neither the girl nor her child had any legal claim.

"Both a good and a great man." There had been a time, so long ago that he had supposed the lesson of forgetfulness well learned, when he had been expected to fulfil fond predictions of this character. He had believed in them himself.

When he had taken his oath of admission to the bar, for instance, how confidently he had felt his feet planted upon the rounds of that mythical ladder of success! How he had tingled with pride when quizzical old men had addressed him as "counselor"! How he had dreamed of the day when his learning and eloquence should master courts and juries, or when from the bench of some high tribunal his judgments should remodel the law of the land!

And he had had ability. Always, even yet, he was conscious of unused powers within himself. He had been the football of fortune—that was all.

Mr. Tice slammed down the cover of his desk, jumped to his feet, and began to pace the narrow confines of his office. It was not yet too late! The money in his pocket would do for him what it had done for Parsons. It was the long-delayed opportunity for which he had waited. With it he could rehabilitate himself, could clothe himself with that air of prosperity which begets confidence and engenders success. He would work hard, and he would go straight. He would challenge the mighty to fair combat. There would be an everlasting end to the contumely, the covert contempt, that had eaten into his marrow. He would compel respect and honor. Once more he would dream his boyhood's dream!

Like an agitated bat, Mr. Tice flitted back and forth through the darkening office, nursing his new-found determination. Presently the room became too small for his swelling ambition, and he put on his hat and seedy overcoat and went out into the streets.

At first he plunged along at a smart pace, immersed in his own plans, fired by his fresh hopes, oblivious to the scenes about him; but after a time he was recalled to outer things. His preoccupation was dispelled by the atmosphere of intangible expectancy that had impressed him earlier in the day, by unusual sights and sounds, by half a dozen threatened collisions with hurrying pedestrians, and by the tingle of eagerness that was in every face. It was Christmas eve!

After this he drifted with the crowds, sympathetically curious, no longer busy with the future, but expanding to that novel and delicious sense of fellowship which had before warmed and fascinated him. At length, so drifting, he came to a great auditorium, into which there flowed a steady stream of people. Mr. Tice went with them, purchasing a seat as others did—not that he cared what was going forward, but only that, whatever it might be, he should have a part in it.

V

INSIDE, he found himself facing a huge stage packed with ordered groups in gala attire, while before the stage an orchestra of many pieces was settling into place. The leader rose and lifted his baton. The immense audience grew silent, breathless. Through the palpitating vault of the great hall floated a single voice, a robust tenor of wonderful timbre and perfect form, in a transcendent cry of healing:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith our God!"

Mr. Tice was thrilled. Once, long ago, in those days when he had dreamed of the triumphs and successes that awaited him, he had fought his imaginary battles and

gained his fantom victories to the undertone of a vast harmony that was life itself; and though the discords of experience had long since shattered and dispersed this music, still, in some forlorn recess of his soul, he loved the art. Now the spell of it laid hold of him again and magically erased the lean and sordid interval that bridged the present and the past.

He fell into a strange confusion, a breaking up of all the mean and twisted habits of thought and feeling that had constituted his maturity. His meager, grimy little soul, chilled by the ill chances of many an unfriendly year, expanded, unfolded itself for cleansing, as if to warm summer rain. A great antiphonal chorus swelled above him:

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given."

It was the pæan of birth, of hope, of the divine future. And as Mr. Tice listened, he perceived something that had not dawned upon his mind before—that this future belongs only to youth; to such youth as had once been his, not to the thwarted, stunted age, bankrupt of time and strength and ambition, that was upon him now.

For it is youth alone that is unselfish, that is filled with high recklessness and daring, that considers nothing but its goal, that is the royal spendthrift of life. And so it is that youth is eternally crowned with sacrifice, while mankind waits upon the deliverance which a child shall bring.

For him to seize with palsied hands upon this future, which is forever divine, would be to profane its possibilities, to debase it with the paltry rivalries and poor anxieties of age, to despoil the world of its most exalted hope. And much as the world owed him, Mr. Tice felt that it owed him no such debt as that.

The music flowed over and about him in lustral streams.

"He shall lead his flock like a shepherd," sang a brooding, tender contralto.

And a soprano voice leaped to the stars in a splendor of arrogant faith:

"I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Mr. Tice felt old and spent, yet strangely at peace. Somewhere, he knew, there would be compensation even for him.

The last "amen" of the closing chorus died away, and, moving with the ebbing crowd, he found his way to the street. The decision with which he had temporized during the afternoon pressed upon him again, but it presented no difficulties now. The claims of the future, the divine future, were paramount.

"For unto us," whispered Mr. Tice softly, "a son is given!"

He went back through the empty streets to his office. No elevator was running at that hour, and he wearily climbed the stairs. Once more at his desk, he took from his pocket the check that had meant so much, and studied it for a long time. And yet, indeed, he did not see it. Rather, he saw beyond it, through so much of life as remained, the burden and the glory of renunciation.

He took an envelope, stamped it, and inscribed upon it the name and address of the girl who should have been Brenner's wife. He took a sheet of paper and wrote on it:

Charles A. Brenner is dead. The enclosed check represents his estate.

He paused wistfully for a moment, then added:

See that your son grows up to be a good man.

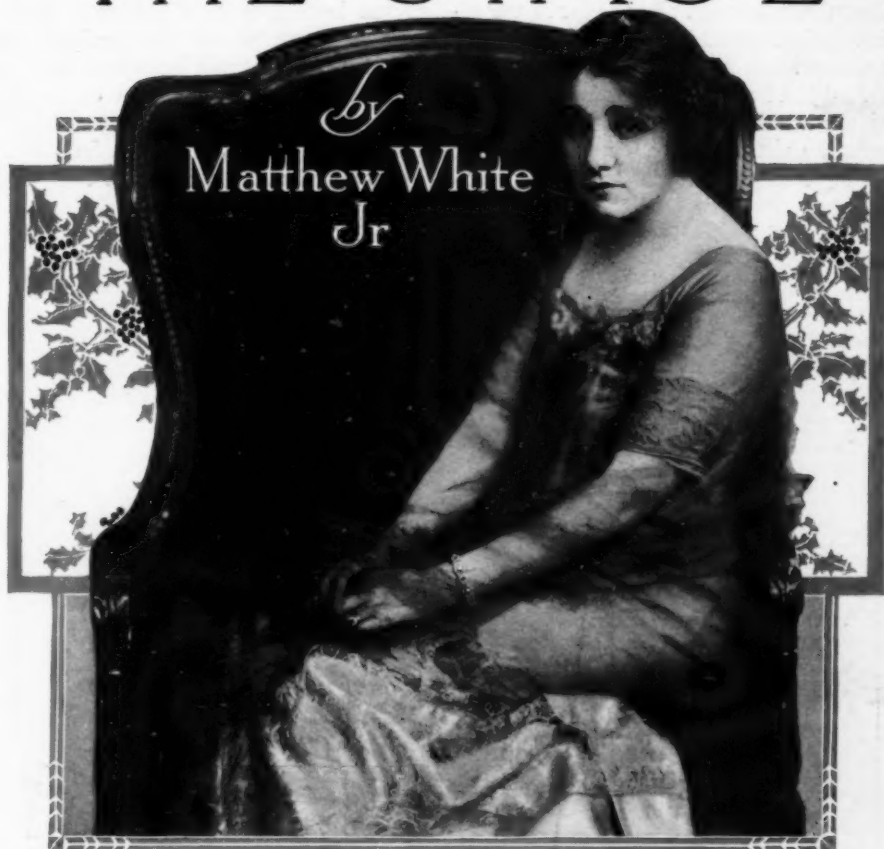
He indorsed the check, folded it in the sheet of paper, and enclosed them in the envelope.

Wearily, yet with deep content, he carried the letter into the corridor and held it above the mail-chute. A queer thought came to him, and brought with it a whimsical grin.

"This," said Mr. Tice to himself; "this, also, is embezzlement!"

Releasing the letter, he watched it flutter and vanish down the chute.

THE STAGE



LAURETTE TAYLOR, BACK HOME AGAIN AND STARRING IN A REPERTOIRE OF THREE NEW PLAYS BY HER HUSBAND, HARTLEY MANNERS, THE FIRST BEING "THE HARP OF LIFE"

From her latest photograph by Davis & Sanford, New York

THE FADING OF THE STARS

ALREADY has the new theatrical year confirmed the tendency of the past two, so far as New York's attitude toward the star is concerned. Not "Who is it?" but "What is it?" ask both the newspaper critic and the man in the street.

In other words, names have counted for very little. Out of the twenty-five new productions that I have seen to date, the two pronounced hits are absolutely starless. Of the five with their leading man or woman flashed in electrics, four were pretty sweepingly condemned by the re-

viewers, and the fifth, whose star was adjudged to be sufficiently strong to carry his vehicle, lasted only a month on Broadway. Of the other four, two took to the road within about the same period, while the Manhattan life of the other two was measured by the comparatively brief period of six weeks each.

Glancing back for a moment, we find the outstanding successes to be plays with all-round casts of clever players, such as "A Pair of Silk Stockings," "It Pays to Advertise," "The Boomerang," "Common Clay," and "Fair and Warmer."

Meanwhile, what of the stars? Most of them are struggling along with unsuitable plays, or "resting" while they frantically hunt through script after script in the effort to find something that will give them a chance.

And just here, in my belief, lies the crux of the whole situation. In reality, the stars are not searching for plays, but for parts. Formerly it paid the managers to

back them up in this more or less vain-glorious hunt, but it does so no longer. I am not prepared to say whether the reason is that nowadays almost all the well-known people of the footlights can be seen on the screen for a dime, or that audiences are demanding an entire evening's entertainment for their two dollars. I am merely setting down the facts.

Possibly both reasons have something



OTIS SKINNER AND ELEANOR WOODRUFF IN THE NEW PLAY BY BOOTH TARKINGTON,
"MISTER ANTONIO"

From a photograph—copyrighted by Charles Frohman, Inc.

to do with the case. The way in which stars in the cinemas are blazoned over theater doors must not only cheapen them when they come to appear in person, but the distinction of this

thing, and thus remove the handicap from the former when he sets out to make a fit.

Take Otis Skinner's new play, "Mr. Antonio," for example. It is easy to understand why this



MARGARET ANGLIN, STARRING IN THE ENGLISH LIGHT COMEDY, "CAROLINE"

From her latest photograph by Dupont, New York

sort of advertising itself is greatly depreciated.

I cannot deny that this decline of the star has something to do with the decided trend toward frivolity which has been charged up against the present season. A player naturally prefers to shine in emotional rather than in ludicrous situations—a fact which puts it up to the playwright and to the personality of the star. Let the latter not insist on having every-

master of the romantic should revel in the rôle of an Italian organ-grinder who acts the good fairy to everybody else in the piece. He talks mellifluously, but, alas, interminably, while one twists in one's seat and wonders why the story doesn't get on. At the end one realizes that if it proceeded any faster, the performance would finish at ten o'clock instead of eleven, because Booth Tarkington's plot isn't big enough.



SARI PETRASS, SINGING THE PRIMA-
"MISS SPRINGTIME"

DONNA RÔLE IN THE MUSICAL-COMEDY HIT,

"MISS SPRINGTIME"

From a photograph by White, New York

The same fault is apparent in Margaret Anglin's latest vehicle, "*Caroline*," by W. Somerset Maugham, another of the London hits that has come in for a severe drubbing at the hands of American critics. The first curtain-fall leaves one without a speck of curiosity as to what may happen next. In fact, not until the middle of the second act, when the doctor diagnoses *Caroline's* complaint as middle age, does one's languid interest perk up a bit.

Briefly, the story is of the death of *Caroline's* husband, with whom she has not lived for ten years. This opens the way for her marriage with a devoted admirer; but, by a strange perversity of human nature, now that they can do so, neither wants to marry. Their friends, however, egg them on remorselessly, and *Caroline* is on the verge of nervous prostration until the doctor asks her, in the last act, if she is a good liar. On her assent, he announces to the others that the statement in the *Times* was a mistake; that *Mr. Ashley* is not dead, but has just visited his wife. Called on for details, Miss Anglin goes through a scene which is the best thing I have ever seen her do, and which should be set down in the season's record as a bit of acting that will probably not have its equal.

"*Caroline*" was produced in early February in London, where it ran until June, with Irene Vanbrugh in Miss Anglin's part, and Lillah McCarthy—here with her husband, Granville Barker, two years ago, in "*Androcies*"—in an absolutely burlesque rôle of a feminist whom poor *Caroline* vainly tries to drive out of her house.

One may obtain an inkling of the reason why comedies from England so persistently fail in New York by noting that the utterance on three occasions of "My hat!" by the juvenile in "*Caroline*" is supposed to be excruciatingly funny. Is it any wonder that in mid-September there



RUTH CHATTERTON IN HER NEW STARRING VEHICLE, "COME OUT OF THE KITCHEN"
From a photograph by Hartsook, San Francisco



were no fewer than eight offerings from this side in West End theaters? "Peg o' My Heart" and "Romance" were still among those present, while "The Misleading Lady" and "Potash and Perlmutter in Society" were the two latest additions to the list.

The one star who stood out as the big winner in the record of the last New York season was Leo Ditrichstein, with "The

Great Lover." It is a coincidence that the new musical comedy, "Miss Springtime," runs closely along the same lines. Both pieces end with the older man resigning the girl to her younger lover, a famous operatic tenor.

"Miss Springtime" is the piece, with a charming score by the Hungarian, Emmerich Kalman, composer of "Sari," announced by Klaw & Erlanger as "Miss



MARGARET BRAINARD AND WILLIAM COLLIER IN A SCENE FROM THE SUCCESSFUL FARCE,
"NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH"

From a photograph by White, New York



DONALD MACDONALD AND JANE GILROY IN A SCENE FROM THE AMERICAN-MADE MUSICAL COMEDY,
"THE AMBER EMPRESS"

From a photograph by White, New York

Rabbit Foot" last season. With a new book by Guy Bolton and lyrics of unusual originality by P. G. Wodehouse and Herbert Reynolds, it promises to be the musical rage of the winter. The scenery is by Urban, and a prima donna new to America is introduced in Sari Petrass, for whom it is said that Kalman wrote "Sari," in which she sang in England. She is a Hungarian, and achieved her first success at the Royal Opera House in Budapest — on the stage of which, as it

happens, the last act of "Miss Springtime" is laid.

Georgia O'Ramey, a dyed-in-the-wool American girl, supplies the fun on the distaff side. She was seen at this same New Amsterdam Theater a year ago in "Around the Map," which, alas, didn't carry very far around the season. Those who remember her in "Seven Days" might be surprised to see her in a musical piece if such transfers weren't constantly happening nowadays. She has one song to herself, "A Very Good Girl on Sunday," and shares with John E. Hazzard and Jed Prouty repeated encores for their burletta, "The Old-Fashioned Drama," in which "Blood, blood, blood" is the refrain.

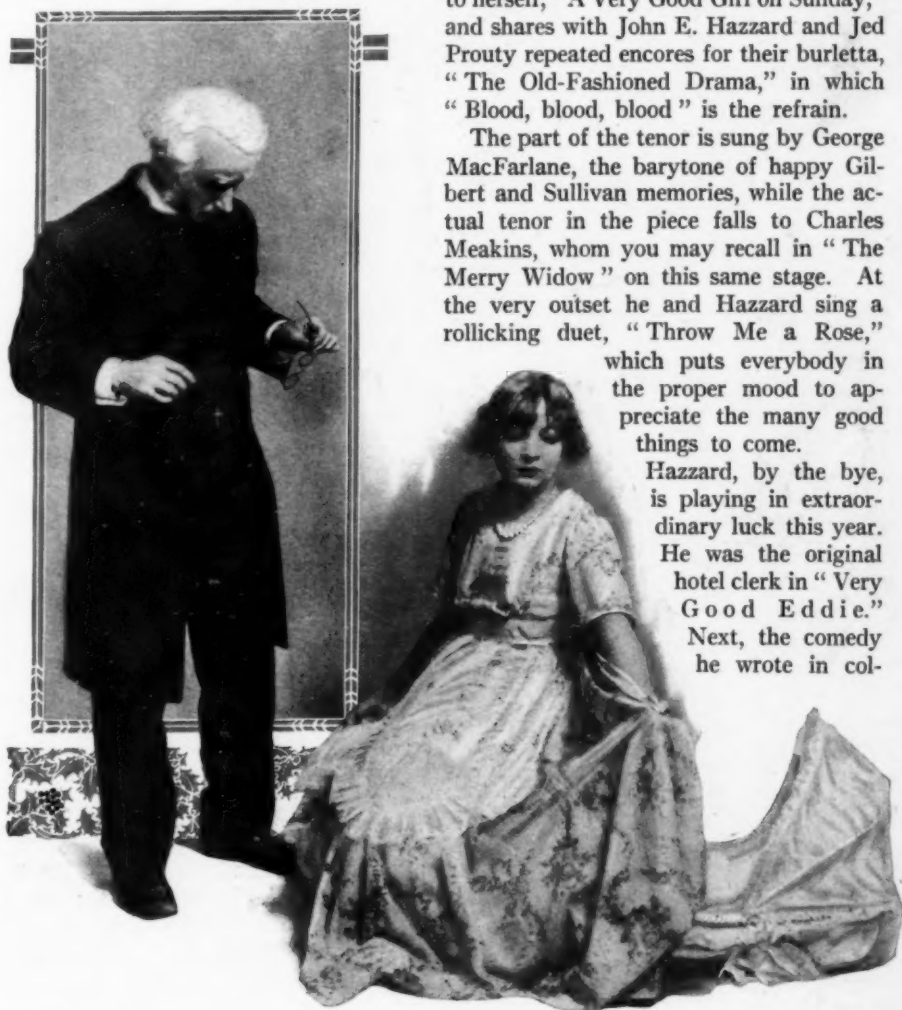
The part of the tenor is sung by George MacFarlane, the barytone of happy Gilbert and Sullivan memories, while the actual tenor in the piece falls to Charles Meakins, whom you may recall in "The Merry Widow" on this same stage. At the very outset he and Hazzard sing a rollicking duet, "Throw Me a Rose,"

which puts everybody in the proper mood to appreciate the many good things to come.

Hazzard, by the bye, is playing in extraordinary luck this year.

He was the original hotel clerk in "Very Good Eddie."

Next, the comedy he wrote in col-



CECIL YAPP AND ESTELLE WINWOOD IN A SCENE FROM "HUSH!" AT NEW YORK'S LITTLE THEATER

From a photograph by White, New York



CHRISTINE NORMAN AND JULIETTE DAY IN A SCENE FROM THE COMEDY OF FASHIONABLE LONG ISLAND LIFE, "UP-STAIRS AND DOWN"

From a photograph by White, New York

laboration with Winchell Smith, "Turn to the Right," has proved the leading success of the new season; and now he wins the most laughs in yet another hit.

In the rush of new productions I have not had a chance to see another operetta of Germanic origin and with Joseph Urban settings—"Flora Bella," from which we

gave you a picture last month. I am told that the music is charming and the dancing particularly fine. The critics were very good to this Casino show, which is more than can be said for the fashion in which they handled "The Amber Empress."

This latter operatic comedy is of American manufacture, which, judging by recent

records, would seem to be enough to condemn it out of hand. There were some good spots in the thing, particularly those occupied by Emma Janvier and Frank Lalor, but the whole was cast too much in a mold that belongs to the nights that were. This despite a movie *motif*.

Speaking of old-time plays as travestied in the trio from "Miss Springtime," here we have "The Intruder," stiffly labeled "a drama," and living up to all the traditions of the French school in the heyday of Sardou. And it was written by — whom do you suppose? Cyril Harcourt, no less, whose comedy, "A Pair of Silk Stockings," caused New York to laugh a whole season through, and who last spring supplied Marie Tempest with the scarcely less clever "A Lady's Name."

Of course, the answer is that "The Intruder" must have been written in Harcourt's early days, before he arrived at the silk-stocking period which caused managers to be eager for anything from his trunk of scripts. But he must have reached very far down in it for "The Intruder"!

The scene is laid in Paris, the eternal triangle is sprung at curtain-rise, and the present season's tendency to crime pops out before ten minutes' traffic of the piece has passed. Briefly, the wife has a lover, whom she begs to stay with her that night, while her husband is away. That same



MARGARET ROMAINÉ AND JOHN CHARLES THOMAS AS THEY APPEAR IN THE NEW MUSICAL COMEDY,
"HER SOLDIER BOY"

From a photograph by White, New York

night the house is robbed, and you can at once guess the rest—lover and robber mutually confused, and the former put to the test of confessing to a theft he did not commit in order to save the lady's name.

But he is such a poor fool, this lover, who leaves his watch behind him in the

woman," and brother of Frank Kemble Cooper, the husband in the present piece. But the crowning mischance is the ending, suggesting brain-fag on the author's part, just when one was looking for the burglar to make one more appearance and wind things up with the twist without which few plays nowadays reach the footlights.



E. H. SOTHERN, EDITH STOREY, BRINSELY SHAW, AND ROWLAND BUCKSTONE IN THE GREATER VITAGRAPH FILM, "AN ENEMY TO THE KING"

lady's boudoir and gives the wrong envelope to his servant to mail when everything depends upon his handing him the right one. One might not be so impatient over such sloppy work were not a great deal of the play absorbingly interesting, despite its archaic form.

A delicious part—that of the real thief—is deliciously played by H. Cooper Cliffe, onetime *Nobody* in "Every-

Olive Tell, who was *Lady Margaret* last spring with Lou-Tellegen in "A King of Nowhere," looks beautiful as the wife who proclaims her own shame, but one could not easily picture her passionate adoration for Vernon Steel. Now, if it had been Conway Tearle! But perhaps such a combination of good looks would have kept the piece from getting past the police. Even as it stands, it's more than



TAYLOR HOLMES AND FLORENCE SHIRLEY IN A SCENE FROM "HIS MAJESTY BUNKER BEAN,"
IN WHICH MR. HOLMES IS STARRING FOR HIS SECOND SEASON

From a photograph by Berger, Cleveland



JANET BEECHER AND GEORGE NASH IN THE DRAMA OF PRISON LIFE, "UNDER SENTENCE,"
WRITTEN BY IRVIN COBB AND ROI COOPER MEGRUE

From a photograph by White, New York

a bit "thick," as our English cousins would phrase it.

A CAPITAL WAR-TIME
COMEDY

At last a war play that pleases! It comes in the form of a comedy, too—"Arms and the Girl," scene laid in Belgium on August 4, 1914. Rather a difficult proposition to manage, one might think, but the authors, Grant Stewart, actor, and Robert Baker, who wrote "Conspiracy" with John Emerson, have succeeded emphatically, with the aid of a thoroughly charming ingénue, Fay Bainter, whom New York never saw before. They show good judgment in staging their little piece at the psychological moment before the war took on the horrors that have since marked its course.

Miss Bainter comes from a training in stock, just as Marjorie Rambeau did two years ago. In "Arms and the Girl" she is a young American woman who misses connections and is forced to take refuge for the night at a hotel in a small Belgian town. Come the Germans, one of whom, a lieutenant—capitally played by J. Malcolm Dunn, Englishman though he be—has met *Miss Sherwood* at the Olympic games. Her passport has been stolen, but the lieutenant vouches for her when his general is on the hunt for spies. Through the goodness of her heart, to save the life of Cyril Scott, a fellow American whom she has just met, she identifies him as her *fiancé*, whose arrival from Paris is expected. The suspicious general will not believe her until the burgomaster marries them on the spot—which ceremony brings the first curtain down on what actors term a "smashing climax."

When the real *fiancé* appears he is naturally somewhat perturbed at what has happened, and he is not at all mollified when the newly married couple, forced to



REGINA WALLACE, LEADING WOMAN IN
"RICH MAN, POOR MAN"

From a photograph by White, New York



CYRIL SCOTT AND FAY BANTER AS THEY APPEAR
IN THE FIRST ACT OF THE WAR-TIME COMEDY
HIT, "ARMS AND THE GIRL"

From a photograph by White, New York

a new deception, represent him as their chauffeur. The happy ending is achieved by proving him rather a sorry figure, so that *Miss Sherwood* is glad to exchange him for Cyril Scott, who couldn't be better suited with the part had he been liquefied and run into it. Not only is this piece interesting and amusing, but it need offend neither Belgians nor Germans, although I did hear a hiss or two mingled with the laugh aroused by the Teutonic general's line:

"Remind me to send them a wedding-present when we get to Paris next week."

"HUSH!" ALMOST EQUALS ITS TITLE

So attractive a spot is the Little Theater that the play becomes almost a secondary consideration with the critics.

"It's just like a theater in a rich man's house," said my companion at "Hush!" the comedy with which Winthrop Ames sent up his curtain after a whole season of darkness for this jewel of an auditorium.

Violet Pearn, evidently a disciple of Bernard Shaw, wrote the new vehicle, which has already been presented in the English provinces, and is a frank pillorying of drama designed to shock people. Her scheme involves a play within a play, and if the stone had only been as brilliant as the setting a more wholly enjoyable evening might have been spent. Even as it is, there is plenty of entertainment in the story of the young woman with advanced ideas who tries in vain to

scandalize her *fiancé's* parents, and the comedy is so capitally played that it would be a pity for any regular theater-goer to miss it.

Estelle Winwood, the heroine in the alleged "shocker," is a newcomer from England, and it is surprising to learn that she has been on the stage for twelve years. She began as a child with Sir John Hare in "School." More recently she has gained a wide experience in the repertory theater at Liverpool, which is beginning to run Manchester a race for first honors in playhouses that look for quality rather than "draw" in their offerings.

Cecil Yapp, who is Miss Winwood's father-in-law in the play within the play, was with Mr. Ames at the New Theater, where he made his mark as the cat in "The Blue Bird." Two years ago, under the same manager, he was the crazy man in the ill-fated prize play, "Children of Earth." Cathleen Nesbitt, who enacts the playwright in "Hush!" was the typist in "Quinneys" a year ago, and *Ruth Honeywell*, the only woman in "Justice," last spring.

THREE DIVERSE BOOK PLAYS

There is but one woman in "Under Sentence," a story of prison life based on a tale by Irvin Cobb and dramatized by Mr. Cobb and Roi Cooper Megrue. Apparently the authors have borrowed freely from the ideas of Thomas Mott Osborne in working out the piece. The first half is graphically tense, particularly the first two scenes, showing the arrest of the catpaw. Later on the prison episodes develop into something very much like extravaganza.

The Selwyns have not stinted on the cast. Janet Beecher must be delighted to have a rôle in such sharp contrast to her farce creation in "Fair and Warmer" last season, but George Nash, as a hard-fisted man of affairs, is still in the same groove that he fits so well. Two years ago, to be sure, he showed his versatility by enacting *Doc Madison* in "The Miracle

Man." The summer before last he starred briefly in "Three of Hearts."

Taylor Holmes is a real star in "His Majesty Bunker Bean," a comedy that owes everything to the fashion in which it is played. I have never read the stories by Harry Leon Wilson, and having seen the play I do not care to read them. Lee Wilson Dodd has made sad patchwork of his task, but in the hands of Mr. Holmes for *Bean*, Charles Abbe as *Pops*, Jack Devereaux as *Bulger*, and Florence Shirley as the *Flapper*, the piece develops an amount of laughter which is positively marvelous when one considers how the script itself must have read.

I first got to know Taylor Holmes when he was with Robert Edeson in "Ranson's Folly." I realized then that he was cleverer than most, and I am glad to see him arrived now at the goal of the actor's ambition—his name in the electric. He has worked hard and long to attain it, and in this case the honor is fully justified.

Mr. Holmes is nothing if not versatile, and is far from playing merely himself as *Bunker*. Eighteen months ago he was in the roaring farce, "The Third Party"; then he switched to the pathetic *Gecko* in "Trilby." He claims never to have read the story of "Bunker Bean"—for which he is perhaps to be congratulated.

Florence Shirley is yet another of the many young actresses whom Broadway sees for the first time this season, and in a leading part. She was trained in the Castle Square stock, Boston, and was suggested to Mr. Dodd as an ideal impersonator of the *Flapper* in "Bunker Bean" long before he had written the play, when he was merely explaining its scenes and characters to the class at Smith College to which he was in the habit of lecturing once a week on the drama.

Still another very young and exceedingly attractive leading woman, new to Manhattan, was revealed in the third book play of this October week—"Rich Man, Poor Man," dramatized by George

Broadhurst from a story by Maximilian Foster. She is Regina Wallace, and she came absolutely unheralded to the Forty-Eighth Street Theater, where the reception of the piece was a commingling of "bouquets and brickbats." The *Times* called it the most interesting play in town, while the *Tribune* charged it with all the vices of a theatrical concoction. The *World* opined that a play of such honest, homely appeal should find a response; the *Evening Sun*, on the other hand, declared that it lacked both distinction and reality, and was neither good romance, good comedy, nor good drama.

To my thinking, far and away the best thing about "Rich Man, Poor Man," is Regina Wallace, who walked into Mr. Broadhurst's office one day and asked if he had anything for her. He snapped her up at once for *Bab*, although her only previous stage experience appears to have been a single line in "The Good Little Devil" and a brief experience in a Yonkers stock company.

FASCINATING INGÉNUE AND FAMOUS STAR

There's enormous draft-power in the theme of "Up-stairs and Down," the comedy of fashionable Long Island life by Frederic and Fanny Hatton, who first invaded New York with "Years of Discretion," and who captured it again last season, in conjunction with Leo Ditrichstein, with "The Great Lover."

Everybody is a great lover in "Up-stairs and Down," but particularly *Alice Chesterton*, as acted by one of the most fascinating ingénues Manhattan ever welcomed. Her name is Juliette Day, and she is even prettier than our picture makes her. There could not well be a greater contrast to her present rôle than the one in which Broadway first saw her four years ago at the Fulton Theater, where she originated *Plum Blossom* in "The Yellow Jacket." On that occasion the *Times* critic justly called her "a delicate little beauty with an air of modesty and reserve most ingratiating." She has since played *Modesty* in "Everywoman."

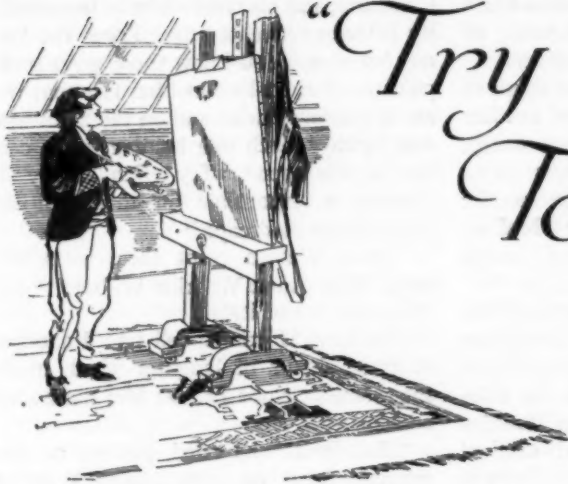
My singling out Miss Day for special mention does not imply that the "typical Morosco cast" of "Up-stairs and Down" is in any sense below the high average that the clever Western manager has maintained for this special trade-mark of his. All the fourteen players are clever.

Christine Norman will be recalled as having played at this same Cort Theater in the long run of "Peg o' My Heart." Last season she was *Hildegard Sanbury* in "The Unchastened Woman." Courteney Foote, the Irish captain who sets all the women's hearts aflame, has lately been in the pictures. It is companies of such all-round excellence as this that are doing much toward routing the star system out of the body theatrical.

On the other hand, it is the star alone who gives life to "The Music Master," just revived by Belasco for David Warfield. Without Warfield, the play would undoubtedly have died soon after its first performance at what is now the Republic Theater, on September 26, 1904. With him, it ran for three seasons, and was only laid aside because he had no wish to follow in the footsteps of Joe Jefferson and the sempiternal *Rip*.

His playing of his famous rôle is just as tender, as quaintly humorous, as subtly touching now as when he was fresh at it, and there is certain to be a succession of packed houses wherever the piece is shown. Marie Bates, of the original cast, is with him again, and it is a pleasure to record the restoration of the redecorated Knickerbocker Theater to the legitimate with such a brilliant send-off.

In the same week another theater in the down-town district, the Garrick, returned from its incursion into the fields of burlesque and pictures. Under the auspices of the Shuberts, and with several new coats of paint, it made a bid for up-town patronage with "Le Poilu," an operatic comedy of the present war in Europe, done very neatly in French by a company which tarries at the Garrick only until the completion of its own Théâtre Français in Forty-Fifth Street.



"Try a Tin To-Day"

by
Joyce Kilmer

"AND now," said John Potts, whirling around on the piano-stool and throwing his lank forelock back with a jerk of his head, "we will interpret Grace Mallon's soul!"

"Oh, wait till she comes, John!" boomed the Rev. Morris Gildell. "She was at the Karl Marx Forum in our parish-house last night, and she said positively she'd be down here this afternoon."

"Yes, do wait!" said Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur, placing her fat hands, covered with rings set with semiprecious stones, over those of the pianist. "Do wait! It will be wonderful for her to hear it!"

The host of the occasion was Edwin Marmaduke, painter. He was at present engaged in spooning Arabian incense out of a cocoa-tin and putting it into a large bronze thurible, which hung before a plaster replica of Rodin's "Le Baiser." The incense caught fire, and dense clouds of fragrant smoke filled the little studio. Then Marmaduke turned his pale but agreeable face to his guests.

"No, do it now!" he commanded. "Perhaps you and Arthura will bring her with it."

So John Potts struck a few minor chords, and Arthura Lewis lifted her pale-green mantle in both thin arms, smiled at the low ceiling, closed her eyes, and

danced. She did not really dance. She merely bent and kicked and gestured, approximately in rhythm with the music.

She was not really Miss Arthura Lewis, either. Her first name, which she had discarded as too usual, was Alice and her last name was Potts, for she was the pianist's wife. They were known to live together in the little apartment across Patchin Place from Marmaduke's studio, but the fact of their marriage was scrupulously kept a secret from the other members of their emancipated circle. No liaison was ever hidden from the world more zealously than was the regularity and mid-Victorian respectability of this seeming "free comradeship."

So John Potts played and Arthura danced, and the theme they were interpreting was Grace Mallon's soul. Edwin Marmaduke's eyes were turned toward Arthura, but he did not see her. Nor did he see Grace's soul. He saw her eyes—very gray and lovely—and her hair, which was golden-brown and had an indefinable air of mirth about it.

Marmaduke loved Grace better than cigarettes, or incense, or art; better even than the school of painting of which he was the acknowledged master, the school which proudly accepted a name first decisively given it—the Incomprehensiblists.

So, while Arthura twisted and turned and John Potts hammered out discords, he thought of Grace's beauty and charm.

To do him justice, he did not think of her great wealth. In fact, he did not like to think of her wealth, for that wealth came from her father's success in a most unesthetic business. Grace was the daughter of "Try a Tin To-day" Mallon, who was known in the world of canned goods as the Salmon King.

There was no vulgar hand-clapping after the artists had finished their interpretation of Grace's soul; but the Rev. Morris Giddell rattled his spoon against the sides of his teacup, while Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur sighed ecstatically and clanked her chain of heavy amber beads. Even in the act of lighting a cigarette, John Potts started dramatically and pointed toward the open window.

"*La voilà!*" he exclaimed. "We have summoned her! I hear the rumble of her chariot-wheels."

There did indeed come from the cobbles of Patchin Place the whir and snort of an automobile. Soon the great gong on the wall clanged viciously, causing Arthura Lewis to shudder and clasp her long, white hands to her eyes. Edwin Marmaduke sped down the four flights of stairs that intervened between his studio and the street door.

His deserted guests looked at one another expectantly.

"Dear Grace!" said Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur. "I hope she came alone. I can't stand that friend of hers—what is his name?—that Watson person."

"He is a terrible bromid," said Arthura Lewis, lighting a cigarette. "He's so very—so very, shall I say, salmony!"

This was said with humorous intent and received with kindly laughter.

"But what has Mr. Watson to do with salmon, anyway?" asked John Potts. "Does he catch them, or what is it?"

"Nothing so exciting as that," said the Rev. Morris Giddell, with a great chuckle. "He merely celebrates them. He is the advertising manager of the Mallon Salmon

Company, and his chief claim to immortality is that he invented the 'Try a Tin To-day' slogan. You know those great pink pictures of ridiculous-looking fish that we see in public vehicles and on the highways and byways, each one holding out a can bearing the legend, 'Try a Tin To-day'? Watson is responsible for those mutilations of the landscape."

"Does Watson paint them himself?" asked Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur. "He looks capable of it."

The Rev. Morris Giddell issued another of those shouts of laughter which made the women's clubs believe him masculine and hearty.

"Excellent!" he cried, putting an approving hand on Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur's fat, bare shoulder. "Oh, excellent! No, Watson doesn't paint them, but he does worse—he inspires them. He persuades some poor devil of an artist to make these hideous caricatures of the truth. He is the Mæcenas of the 'Try a Tin To-day' school of painting."

After waiting for the murmur of amusement to die down, the Rev. Morris Giddell continued:

"Grace brought Watson to the Feminist Conference at our church last week, and several people asked me what a rare, free spirit like her could see in such a clod. I suppose she feels that she must go around with him occasionally because he is so useful to her father. But I hope she doesn't think of marrying him!"

"Marrying him!" exclaimed Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur, Arthura Lewis, and John Potts in unison. "I hope not!"

"Why," said Arthura Lewis, "it would be a tragedy for an emancipated woman like Grace to marry at all! Not to speak of marrying such a soulless, brainless animal as that David Watson! I'd as soon see her—"

But the conversation was interrupted by the opening of the studio door and the entrance of Grace and their young host.

Edwin Marmaduke seemed somehow to look younger than before. He had lost a little of his expression of languor and dis-

dain; and Grace was the very personification of radiant girlhood. In spite of her knowledge of her own good looks and good clothes, she was charmingly deferential to these people, whom she considered intellectuals. Her naively respectful greeting to the Rev. Morris Gildell seemed for the moment to restore to that drawing-room revolutionist some strange lost dignity.

Men and women alike greeted the young girl with genuine friendliness. When her gray motor-cloak had been hung over the corner of an easel, and she had been seated on one of the few real chairs the studio boasted, and served with sweet biscuits, a cup of tea, and a cigarette, then the great event of the afternoon occurred—the unveiling of Marmaduke's portrait of her.

The blinds were drawn—for the Incomprehensibilist painting is best appreciated in semidarkness. The incense-pot received some new fuel; John Potts played something "very golden" on the piano; and Edwin Marmaduke reverently drew back the gay Indian scarf that covered his masterpiece.

II

FOR a detailed description of Edwin Marmaduke's "Soul Study in B-Minor—for G. M.," the reader is referred to the introduction to the catalogue of the "Seven Rebels" exhibition at the Stein Galleries, or to the admirable essay "Incomprehensibilism—a Step Forward," which appeared in that sprightly but short-lived weekly review, the *Ultimate Democracy*. This at least was obvious—that the portrait was large and mauve; this at least was generally agreed upon—that it was wonderful.

The Rev. Morris Gildell defiantly, Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur cooingly, Arthura Lewis prayerfully, Grace Mallon respectfully, Edwin Marmaduke himself modestly—all said it was wonderful. And after Mrs. Anna Watkins Wilbur had embraced the young painter, and his other guests had clasped his hand, and they had all said "Wonderful!" many, many times,

they clattered down the uncarpeted stairs to the street.

All, that is, but one—Grace Mallon. She still remained in the old Italian chair, holding an empty cup and an unlighted cigarette. She looked out of the window into dusty Patchin Place, and one slender, unjeweled hand lay on the sill. It was an attractive hand, although the sun had turned it a shade darker than that of Edwin Marmaduke. It seemed firm and soft at the same time.

Edwin was, after all, human, and therefore he seized it; but Grace withdrew it from his grasp—not very abruptly, however.

"Now, Edwin," she said, "you must be very proper and mid-Victorian and all that sort of thing, since I'm being a reckless, forward young woman and staying here in your studio all alone with you. Now sit down there like a good boy and listen to me. Heavens! I wonder what David *would* say if he knew I was doing this!"

"Why do you care what David Watson would say?" asked Edwin, gently swinging the thurible to and fro before his goddess. "He's busy with his 'Try a Tin To-day' pictures. He isn't thinking about you or anything else that is beautiful."

"Stop swinging that incense thing around. You make me nervous!" Grace replied irrelevantly. "I hate that stuff; it makes me think about when I had whooping-cough. Of course I don't care about what David thinks, silly! Last night he came up to the house, and he said something that hurt me very much."

She paused interrogatively. Edwin put the extinguished thurible on a teakwood stand, dusted his fingers on a yellow silk handkerchief, and sat down on a cushion at Grace's feet.

"Well, what did he say?" he asked.

Grace's color had risen, making her more adorable than ever.

"Really, Edwin," she said, "I sometimes think that you are almost too skilful in repressing your emotions. I said he hurt me very much."

Edwin threw his cigarette into the coal-scuttle with a despairing gesture.

"My dear Grace," he said, "what would you have me do? Challenge him to a duel? Of course I'm tremendously sorry; but why do you talk to such an animal as Watson?"

Grace looked at him with a rather cynical smile.

"You men are pretty much alike, after all," she said. "What David said that hurt me was just like what you are saying about him. He made fun of you and your painting—of course, that hurt me terribly—and then he actually had the nerve—the impudence to *forbid* me to come to your studio! Think of it! David Watson, whose only idea of art is a stupid fish holding a tin of dad's salmon and saying 'Try a Tin To-day'—that man to tell me what to do and what not to do! I'll tell you what I did. I forbade him ever to come to my home or to speak to me again! When I came down here this afternoon, I stopped at dad's office purposely. I know David was watching me when I left, and I said to Leon, 'Take me to Mr. Marmaduke's studio in Patchin Place'—loud, so he'd hear me!"

Edwin looked almost handsome as he smiled up at her from his cushion.

"That's my brave little comrade!" he said. "And soon we shall be married, sha'n't we? Remember, you'll keep your maiden name, and you won't promise to honor or obey me, or any of that cruel rubbish. Gildell will use that lovely 'Polyrhythmic Ritual for a Free Mating,' and there'll be just the people we love best present. Arthura will dance, and it will all be wonderful!"

Grace gripped the arms of her chair and moistened her lips nervously.

"Edwin," she said, "I haven't told you yet why I stayed here to-day. I told dad to come here at six o'clock."

"Mr. Mallon coming here at six o'clock!" said Edwin, rising to his feet. "Why, it's five minutes to six now!"

"Yes, he's coming here right away. And, Edwin—he knows," said Grace.

"You told him?" asked Edwin in unconcealed amazement.

"Yes, I told him, idiot!" said Grace, springing up from her chair. "How else do you suppose he knows? Do you think he read my burning passion written on my brow? Have some sense! Did you never hear of a girl telling her own father that she was engaged?"

"Of course!" said Edwin. "Of course! I understand. But what did he say, and why is he coming here?"

"That's just it," said Grace, drawing on a white glove hurriedly and splitting it in the process. "I told him last night, right after David went away; and he said he didn't like artists and didn't like you—don't be angry, Edwin, he's only seen you three times. I told him you were really a great painter, and he said that he wanted me to be happy, and that he'd have a talk with you and see what you were made of."

"See what I am made of!" said Edwin with a sneer. "Why, does he think—"

"Now, Edwin, please, please, *please*, don't say anything bright!" said Grace. "You know dad has had only me to talk to since mother died, and he isn't used to bright people. He doesn't like them. Now be sensible, and—here he comes now!"

They had not heard the great motor-car swing around the corner of Jefferson Market and come to a stop at the entrance to Patchin Place; but they heard the clang of the gong on the studio wall, and together they went to the street-door and brought the Salmon King up the rickety stairs to the studio.

III

JAMES MALLON was what is called a captain of industry. That is, he was one of those men who are always shown by the realistic cartoonists to be grossly fat, with very small heads, tremendous cigars, and suits of clothes covered with a chaste pattern of dollar-marks.

He no more looked the part, however, than you look the part of the *Common People*. He was slender, graceful, and

modestly dressed; he had a neat, white mustache, thin gray hair, and a mildly humorous expression. He loved his motherless daughter, his business, golf, pinocle, Smithfield ham, buckwheat cakes and maple-sirup, dry Sauterne, and detective-stories. He did not wear spats.

Mr. Mallon sat in the Italian chair, and after a brief survey of the room, turned to his postulant son-in-law a puzzled but amiable face.

"Mr. Marmaduke," he said, "don't you think that you and I could talk a little more comfortably if I sent this youngster of mine home? Run away, Grace, and have Leon take you straight to the house. I'll be back in time for dinner."

Grace gave her father that birdlike peck which is the traditional filial kiss, and ran down-stairs in accordance with his directions. She went to her car, and called Leon from his conversation with her father's chauffeur. There arose a rumble and a rasping roar, and her car sped over the cobblestones to the corner and up Sixth Avenue.

Oh, woman, in our hours of ease, what a double-faced hussy you are, anyway! Grace's car went away—presumably home—but Grace stayed behind. She had left the street-door of the house ajar. She tiptoed up the stairs to the top floor, where her father and her lover were engaged in important private discourse.

She came to a halt about three steps from the top, and perched in the dust with her golden-brown head on a level with the broad streak of light which marked the bottom of the studio door. A shameless eavesdropper, she listened greedily.

First she heard her father's voice:

"I have heard your paintings praised highly by critics whose opinions I respect," it said. "The fact that I myself fail to appreciate their merit is by no means to your discredit. I am not a connoisseur, and I am very old-fashioned in all my tastes. But I must say frankly that your success as a painter of ultramodern pictures scarcely seems to me to qualify you to marry my daughter."

She half hoped, half feared, that Edwin would say:

"I love your daughter and she loves me. That makes our union necessary and right."

But instead he said, in a low, tense voice which she had never heard him use before:

"But I may say without boasting that my art is not a failure, even financially. I have sold six paintings since last May, and the smallest check I received was for one hundred and twenty-five dollars."

"Indeed?" her father replied courteously. "I am glad to hear it, Mr. Marmaduke—very glad to hear it. I did not know that the public was sufficiently fond of these new and unusual forms of art to invest money in them. I see that I was wrong. But you must forgive me, Mr. Marmaduke, if I say that in my opinion the demand for—what is it you call them? I am getting old, and my memory is not what it was—ah, yes, thank you!—the demand for Incomprehensiblist paintings is not likely to be of great duration. The public is fickle, sir; it has no use for last year's novelties. Can you expect to invent new methods of painting yearly for its pleasure? You would have found it more profitable, in the long run, to paint in the traditional manner."

Edwin did not speak for several seconds. Then he said, with an air of deliberation:

"No, Mr. Mallon. I think you are wrong. I tried painting in the traditional manner, and I made much less money than I am making now. Except for commercial work, the only sort of painting that pays to-day is—well, what you would call freak painting."

"Ah!" Grace heard her father say. "Exactly—except for commercial work! There is a field for a young man! I cannot blame you for being an idealist; but you wish to marry my daughter, and I confess that I should prefer to see her married to a successful commercial draftsman—say, an artist connected with some sound advertising agency—than to—well, to an Incomprehensiblist."

The listening girl smiled at her father's words. Edwin Marmaduke and advertisements! It was an amusingly fantastic combination.

She heard Edwin cross the room and open a door. Then he seemed to be taking something from a closet. There was clattering and grating, as if canvases were being moved about.

"Before I show you these," he said, "I must ask you to promise to treat this matter as strictly confidential."

"Of course I promise, Mr. Marmaduke," said her father. "But really I am not competent to judge your work—"

Edwin made no oral answer. From the sounds that came to her Grace conjectured that he was lifting and placing one of his paintings on an easel. She wondered which one it was—certainly it could not be her portrait!

"Good Lord!" she heard her father say. "Good Lord!"

Then came silence.

IV

FRANTIC with curiosity, Grace rose from the step and tried to look into the room through the keyhole. The presence of a key made her effort unavailing. She heard the rustle of pictures hastily turned, and her father's iteration of "Good Lord!"

Then Edwin spoke.

"Now," he said, "you see that my work has some practical value, don't you? You recognize these drawings, don't you?"

"Recognize them!" said Mr. Mallon. "I should say I did. Do you mean to tell me—"

"Yes," said Edwin. "They're my work, all of them. Watson let the Parker Company handle their campaign, and I've done all their high-class work for the past three years."

The Parker Company! Grace dimly remembered hearing that name. Yes, David Watson had said something about the Parker Company.

"I don't sign any of this stuff," said Edwin, "but it's all mine. I originated that idea of the fish holding a can in his

fin. I make all the 'Try a Tin To-day' pictures."

She was at first too stunned to move. Vaguely she heard her father's laugh, vaguely she heard him congratulating Edwin and inviting him to the house. Then, with a sense of walking in her sleep, she found herself at the foot of the stairs, fumbling at the catch of the street-door. She walked all the way home.

But it was a composed and apparently happy young woman who entered the Mallon house an hour later. Her father had already returned, and not even the fact that dinner had been delayed by her tardiness could account for his air of excitement.

"Grace," he said, "I was pleasantly surprised by that young man, that Edwin Marmaduke. He is no mere freak painter—he is a first-class commercial artist. He doesn't want it known, but—I should never have guessed it, it is a tremendous joke on me—he is the man who originated our 'Try a Tin To-day' posters! Did you know that?"

"Impossible!" said Grace. "Is dinner ready?"

"It's a fact," said her father. "He showed me the drawings. Of course, that changes things. I told him to call this evening—how does that strike you?"

Grace seemed passionately interested in her grapefruit. She looked steadily at it as she answered.

"Well," she said, "I'm afraid I won't be in this evening. You see, I met David Watson on the way home to-day, and he asked me to go to see 'The Boomerang' with him to-night, and I said I'd go."

"Oh!" said her father. "Then I'd better telephone Marmaduke to come to-morrow evening instead—or will you?"

"No," said Grace serenely. "To-morrow night won't do, either. David is coming to call."

Her father looked at her over his glasses. Then he took them off, polished them with a small piece of chamois, replaced them, and looked at her again.

"Oh!" he said.

Steadfast Falters*



A Complete Novel
by E. Mandeville Rogers

RANDOLPH CROSBY'S philosophy of life forbade his feeling or expressing emotion, except for the slender, fair-haired girl who stood beside him, and who had in a measure taken the place of the wife whose memory she perpetuated. Nevertheless, the sight of the thoroughbreds as they filed past the club enclosure, their jockeys perching like monkeys on their glossy backs, made the muscles of his throat contract a little.

Excitement was an almost forgotten sensation for this man who had won as many as seven races in a day with horses he had bred and trained himself. It gave him a pleasurable feeling that youth, with all its joys and enthusiasms, was not irrevocably gone.

"Steadfast looks in the pink of condition," remarked a tall man standing beside him, and sufficiently like him to proclaim their relationship.

George Crosby was tall and straight like his brother, with the erect, easy carriage for which the family had long been noted. It was in the expression of eye and mouth that the main points of difference lay. George's eyes were heavy, with thick lids which gave them a languid, rather tired look, and dark-blue shadows encircled them. His lips were full, and drooped a little at the corners.

Randolph's eyes, on the contrary, looked out of an impassive, almost cynical face with

the cold, critical gaze of one who for half a century had lived hard and, at times, fast. In his desire to experience every sensation that life could offer, he might have followed paths that were shadowed and devious; but through it all he had carried a sense of responsibility to the code of his ancestors—"Play the game for all it's worth, but play it square!"

George, the younger of the brothers, maintained that Randolph's feeling in regard to family tradition was an obsession.

"Your Uncle Randolph's a bit dotty on the subject, Norman," he had remarked to his son one evening, in the confidence of an after-dinner chat, a slight sneer curling the corners of his lips. "Leans over backward when it comes to a point of what he calls honor. Personally, I don't see what difference it makes to the family tree."

Norman had replied ruefully:

"Wish I had a thousand dollars for each of the dusty old codgers! It would come close to getting me out of debt."

His father had eyed the dissipated young face sharply.

"Just the same, don't hit it up too hard, my son. The paternal exchequer has its limitations, you know, and your dad isn't too old to want some of the good things of life himself!"

And Norman had laughed, and said he wouldn't.

He was standing beside his father now, watching the horses with a strained look on his white face.

"Pat says he's in perfect shape," replied Randolph Crosby, in answer to his brother's remark.

His keen eyes softened as they lingered on the horse who hitherto had always carried his colors to victory.

"Are you backing him?" asked George, glancing at the card he held in his hand.

His brother nodded.

"Went in rather deep this time. It looks like such a sure thing. The odds are pretty heavy, and you have to plunge a bit to make it worth while."

He turned to listen to his daughter, who was calling his attention to one of the other horses.

"Dad!" said Norman in a low voice, from which he could not entirely exclude the excitement he evidently felt. "Steadfast isn't going to win!"

His father glanced at him quickly, his heavy eyes narrowing as he concentrated his attention on Norman's subdued tone.

"I've just left the stable," Norman went on; "and I tell you, Steadfast is *not* going to win!"

George Crosby scrutinized his son's face for a moment in silence. Then they moved quietly toward a thick-set man, with a diamond horseshoe pin in his vivid tie, who was standing on the outskirts of the crowd.

A short, faultlessly dressed man with a military carriage put his hand on Randolph Crosby's shoulder.

"Steadfast going to win, Rand?" he asked in a well-modulated voice.

Randolph Crosby lowered the glasses through which he had been following the string of horses as they moved slowly up the stretch, and turned toward the speaker.

"Hope so, I'm sure, Tod," he answered.

Major Barry smiled at him affectionately.

"Advise my staking half my pay on him?" he asked.

Crosby smiled back at him half seriously.

"Betsy," he said, turning to his daughter, "read your godfather a lecture. He's on the verge of succumbing to temptation!"

Elizabeth turned, her bright face illumined by the smile which Major Barry always said made you feel that all nature had suddenly burst into song, and shook her finger at him.

"Really," she exclaimed, "if you boys

don't behave, I shall have to take you home! It's bad enough having one of my fathers plunging heavily; but if you both do, and Steadfast should lose, who is going to keep me supplied with gardenias?"

"Horrors!" Major Barry raised his eyebrows in exaggerated concern. "What a ghastly suggestion! I shall most certainly refrain!"

With a laugh, he walked away with his light, springy step.

Randolph Crosby raised his glasses to his eyes and fixed them on the shifting group of horses on the far side of the green oval. His hand was not as steady as usual as he readjusted the lenses, but it was in an even, perfectly controlled voice that he said "They're off!" as the barrier was sprung.

The words were taken up by the people in the grand stand on the other side of the railing, and simultaneously the crowd rose to its feet.

"Steadfast leads! Steadfast leads!" came an exultant chorus of voices.

The horse had been a consistent winner ever since the season opened, and consequently was high in popular favor. His capture of the richest stake of the year was taken almost as a foregone conclusion, and a great crowd had turned out to see the race and to bring home its share of the proceeds.

The horses swept into the home-stretch with Steadfast well in the van. It looked as if the race was over, and Randolph Crosby was about to lower his glasses when he saw Steadfast falter.

It was only for a second. The boy on the horse's back tightened the rein, and then gave him his head; but in that second before Steadfast regained his stride, Pursuit, who had been playing second to him all the year, and now was following close on his heels, gained perceptibly. His nose crept up until it was outlined against Steadfast's quarter. Then it blotted out Pat's white leg, and then it reached the hand on the bridle.

"What's wrong with Steadfast?"

The question flashed through Randolph Crosby's mind. Certainly there was a marked difference in his running. It was labored, forced, quite unlike the easy swing that had made him famous.

"Pursuit! Pursuit!"

The cry broke in upon him in an agony of apprehension as the horses swept by the grand stand. Pat was riding far forward,

urging Steadfast with hand and voice, and the jockey on Pursuit's back was whipping his mount briskly.

"Give Steadfast the whip! The whip!" shouted the crowd in a frenzy of excitement; but Pat did not heed them, and the horses passed the judges' stand with Pursuit's nose a foot to the fore.

An angry tumult of disappointment surged over the crowd. Randolph Crosby's keen eyes were fixed on Pat's white face as he trotted back to the weighing-stand. As the jockey raised his whip, Crosby's breath escaped through his lips in a little sigh, as if insensibly he had been holding it in expectation of something, he did not know quite what.

The fair girl beside him turned her sweet, troubled face to him.

"Oh, father!" she exclaimed, her blue eyes limpid with sympathy. "I'm so sorry!"

"All in the day's work, Betsy!" he answered with an attempt at gaiety, looking fondly at her. "Can't always win! That would be monotonous. I think I'll go and speak to Pat; he looks a bit cut up."

He strolled off through the brightly colored groups scattered over the lawn. Elizabeth turned to the tall man beside her.

"Poor dad!" she said. "He is disappointed! He idolizes that horse, and I can see it has really hurt him to have him beaten."

"It's too bad! I am sorry!" returned Fairfax Cary, with a regretful glance at the erect gray head disappearing into the crowd. "Steadfast is a great horse, but—"

"You thought so, too!" exclaimed Elizabeth, with a quick glance at the clean-cut profile. "I didn't want to say anything to father, but"—she looked inquiringly into the gray eyes fixed intently on her face—"it seemed to me—"

She stopped abruptly, and the delicate color slowly deepened in her cheeks.

"You're looking very lovely this afternoon," said Cary in a low voice. "I've been wanting to tell you so for two hours, but there's always such a crowd around you!"

Elizabeth laughed a little tremulously.

"What a relief it must be to get it off your mind at last!" she flashed back at him, with a look from under the broad brim of her hat that made the expression in his eyes deepen dangerously.

"It is," he assented seriously. "That's a perfectly new dimple you've developed just under your right eye. How dare you spring anything so distractingly—"

"Where's your father, Elizabeth?" asked a full voice at the girl's elbow.

Elizabeth turned quickly and looked into the handsome, carefully penciled face beside her, whose prominent eyes were staring disapprovingly at Cary's lean, brown countenance.

"Oh, Aunt Maude, is it you? Father went to the stables to speak to Pat. He knew the boy would be heart-broken. You remember Mr. Cary?"

She had introduced them numberless times before, but it always seemed to be necessary to repeat the formality. She had adopted the habit of doing it immediately, in order to take away as much strain as possible from a situation which was always difficult when the two were together.

Cary raised his hat with the quizzical look in his eyes that Elizabeth had learned to expect, and bowed with an almost imperceptible exaggeration of his usual courtly manner.

Mrs. Crosby acknowledged the salutation mechanically, her full eyes wandering indifferently past him.

"Pat's not the only one who is heart-broken," she retorted abruptly. "Practically every one was backing Steadfast, and I know several people who have been pretty hard hit." The thin line of her mouth hardened. She herself had lost more than she could afford on the race, and she was looking for some one on whom to lay the blame. "How about you, Mr. Cary?" she went on, the vaguest suggestion of a sneer in the throaty voice. "Or don't you ever bet?"

"Not often, Mrs. Crosby," answered Cary calmly. "In the first place, I can't afford to lose; in the second, I don't follow the races closely enough to form an intelligent opinion on the relative merits of the horses."

Mrs. Crosby laughed a little unpleasantly.

"Then it is something besides the horses that brings you here?" she asked meaningly.

A slight flush spread over Cary's sensitive face, and the firm line of his chin stiffened.

"Oh, don't put me quite outside the pale," he answered lightly. "You know we Virginians love a good horse, and a race is an inspiring sight, even to one who has never been in a position to follow the sport—or

any other, for that matter," he added whimsically, with a side glance at Elizabeth.

She returned his look with a smile that caused Mrs. Crosby to hunch her plump shoulders uncomfortably as she realized her mistake.

Fairfax Cary had left the family estate in the Shenandoah Valley ten years before, and had come to New York with little besides the clothes on his back, and practically nothing in them. He had met Randolph Crosby in the settlement of an estate against which Crosby had a claim. Struck by the young man's ability, Crosby had employed him in several minor cases of his own. Gradually social intercourse had developed from business relations, until Fairfax Cary became an acknowledged friend of the family, and was in frequent attendance on Elizabeth.

The intimacy had increased so fast that Mrs. Crosby had undertaken to remonstrate with her brother-in-law one afternoon when he had dropped in to tea.

"Good Heavens, Maude!" he had retorted impatiently. "The girl isn't going to marry every man who takes her in to dinner!"

"No, Randolph," answered Mrs. Crosby in the long-suffering way that some women adopt when they feel that the men of their family are deliberately obtuse. "Of course not; but she's going to marry one of them, and you know how easy it is to make a mistake. A girl with Elizabeth's prospects is very attractive, especially to a man with none."

"I don't agree with you that Cary has no prospects. He's a very able chap, and as straight as a string."

Mrs. Crosby had raised her penciled eyebrows slightly.

"Perhaps," she agreed unwillingly, "from a man's standpoint, he may"—there was the faintest possible emphasis on the word—"be all that is desirable; but I'm sure, if Helen had lived, she would have agreed with me that Elizabeth is too rare a girl to be thrown away on an unknown."

A slight quiver had passed over Randolph Crosby's face at the mention of his wife's name. For a moment he was silent, then he said:

"Better not call Fairfax Cary an unknown in Virginia!"

Mrs. Crosby had shrugged her shoulders.

"Virginia is not New York. If you want Elizabeth to bury herself in the country,

why, of course, I have nothing to say." She paused, then she added in a lowered voice: "You know I've always felt that I must take as far as I can her mother's place to Elizabeth, and I can't see her sacrifice herself without a word of protest. I love the girl as dearly as if she were the daughter who was denied to me."

She raised a lace-trimmed handkerchief and dabbed her eyes carefully.

"Awfully good of you, Maude, I'm sure," replied Crosby, uneasily moving his neatly incased foot. "But I don't think we need either of us worry about Elizabeth. She's as level-headed a young woman as I know, and when she makes up that mind of hers"—he looked whimsically at his sister-in-law, a smile, half of pride, half of helplessness, spreading over his face—"I don't think there's any power in heaven or on earth that will move her!"

Mrs. Crosby had spread out her plump, jeweled fingers and raised her eyebrows meaningly, indicating that at least she had done her duty, and the rest lay with him.

She turned now to greet her husband and son as they emerged from the throng about them. There was an intangible atmosphere of elation about them, and Norman's face was flushed.

"Too bad, Betty," he remarked in a rather thick voice to his cousin. "Beastly hard luck! Uncle Randolph's disappointed, I guess—what? Great race, though!"

He pushed back his straw hat from his damp forehead, and taking out his cigarette-case, offered it to Cary with a hand that shook perceptibly. When Fairfax declined, he took out a cigarette, struck the end of it once or twice on the gold lid, lit it, and placed it between his loose lips.

"A lot of money changed hands," he remarked confidentially to Cary, his bloodshot eyes glistening.

The lines of the other man's face hardened, and unconsciously he drew himself up. Turning to Elizabeth, he asked, in an undertone that excluded the others, if she would care to go to the paddock.

Elizabeth glanced at him in quick gratitude, and after a few words of explanation to her aunt they moved away.

Randolph Crosby, in the mean time, had succeeded in making his way through the groups of well-dressed men and women who, eager to sympathize with him and hear his

explanation of the defeat, were impeding his progress to the stable. When he reached his destination, he found Pat watching Jim, the stable-boy, who was rubbing Steadfast down. The boy's angry face was flushed, and a white line encircled his mouth.

"I tell ye it wa'n't no put-up game!" he was saying hotly to another boy, who sat on the bottom of an overturned pail. "I rode a straight race! What do ye take me fer, ye miserable tout?"

He turned threateningly toward the other. The sneer that met him seemed to drive away his last vestige of self-control. Shaking his fist in the other boy's face, his little figure trembling with rage, Pat shouted:

"Ye're a low-mouthed, dirty, snivelin' liar, an' ye know ye're lyin'—" He stopped abruptly as his eyes fell on his employer.

"Well, Pat," remarked Mr. Crosby quietly, watching with a half smile his jockey's tormentor as he slipped hastily away, "what's it all about?"

The boy struggled vainly to regain his self-control.

"The miserable, rotten little kike—"

"Yes, yes," broke in Mr. Crosby coolly. "Leave all that out!"

Pat raised his working face and looked full into the dark eyes that somehow seemed to have lost their cynical expression.

"He said I pulled Steadfast!" he exclaimed. "Said I lost on purpose!"

He turned away abruptly and laid his hand, as if to steady himself, on the horse's deep-breathing side.

"The dirty hound!" he muttered under his breath. "An' me with every cart-wheel I could scrape together on the hoss! If he knowed what that race meant to me!"

Again Pat stopped, his voice trembling.

"Ye don't risk what ye've been workin' fer since ye wuz a kid, scrimpin' an' screwin' so as ye kin hev a place ter put yer sister where she'll be safe from that"—his eyes glanced significantly to the paddock, where flashily dressed men loitered about the horses, discoursing on their points to the painted women who accompanied them—"unless ye've got a dead-sure thing. It ain't no fault o' mine that Steadfast didn't win that race—ye know that, don't ye, Mr. Crosby?"

He drove his hands into the pockets of his breeches and looked appealingly into the older man's face. Mr. Crosby nodded.

"Why did Steadfast lose, Pat?" he asked gravely.

Pat shifted his position uneasily.

"I dunno, sir—I swear I don't. The hoss wuz goin' like a bunch o' machinery, an' I thought I had the race won; an' then all ter once I feels him give, sudden like, just like somethin' inside him had broke down. I done my best, but he'd lost his spring, an' I knowed then he couldn't win; but what the matter wuz—" The boy shook his head despondently. "Did ye hear the crowd yellin' at me to give him the whip? *Steadfast!* Can ye beat that? Lot they know about hosses!" Pat's voice was brimming with scorn as he ran his hand over the animal's glossy neck. "Why, it would ha' broke his heart!"

The horse turned his head and, fastening his great, velvety eyes on the boy, laid his muzzle on Pat's shoulder. The boy hid his face quickly in the horse's mane, but not in time to prevent Crosby's seeing the pitifully quivering chin. For a moment all that broke the silence was the stamping of the other horses in their stalls and the far-off throb of the band.

"Pat!" said Mr. Crosby at last. "Come here, my lad—I want to ask you a question." They drew a little apart until they were quite alone. "Could any one have got at Steadfast?"

The question was almost inaudible, but the jockey's sharp ears caught it, and he shook his head in vehement denial.

"I ain't lef' him day or night, Mr. Crosby," he answered quickly. "I even slep' in the stall—an' when I had ter go and change me togs I lef' Mr. Norman an' Molly with him. Surely he couldn't ha' been no safer?"

The lad looked interrogatively at his employer. Mr. Crosby shook his head, and after telling Pat not to worry any more about the race, and giving him some instructions for the following day, he walked back toward the clubhouse.

As he passed the paddock a short, stocky man in a check suit came toward him. His deep-set eyes brightened as they caught sight of Randolph Crosby, and he stretched out a thick, muscular hand adorned with a large cameo ring.

"How-do, Mr. Crosby? How are you?" he asked, taking an enormous unlighted cigar out of his mouth. "What was wrong with Steadfast?"

His keen black eyes, under their shaggy eyebrows, fixed themselves penetratingly on Crosby's face.

Randolph Crosby raised his eyebrows.

"Nothing, Tutney, as far as I know. I've just been talking to Pat. He says the horse was in perfect shape until the middle of the race; then he seemed to crumple up. I can't understand it."

Tutney replaced the cigar in his mouth, and twisted it around and around with his tongue. The expression on his immovable face never changed.

"Were you backin' him?" he asked bluntly.

Crosby nodded.

"That race cost me quite a lot of money," he replied quietly. "The odds were heavy, and it was a good purse."

Tutney grunted.

"Thought they were wrong!"

"What do you mean?"

The stocky man shifted his weight from one white-gaitered foot to the other and gave the cigar another twist.

"Oh, just some remarks I overheard. Crowd's pretty sore—always is when it loses!"

"What did you hear?" said Crosby, looking sharply at the other.

Tutney hesitated, and Crosby repeated his question in a quiet, cold voice.

"Why, they were sayin'," the man began, lowering his voice, "that the Crosbys had won a lot of money on the race."

Crosby stared incredulously at the stolid face.

"Are they saying that?" he asked in an undertone, as if speaking to himself.

Tutney scrutinized the cold, impassive face sharply. He took the cigar out of his mouth.

"Mr. Crosby," he said at last, "you and I have known each other for ten years—eleven, to be exact—haven't we?"

Crosby inclined his head.

"And we've had a good many deals together of one kind or another." Again Tutney waited for the other man's assent. "And in that time, in spite of the fact that there were plenty of chances for shady practise, I want to go on record as sayin' you're the squarest man I ever met, bar none!"

He turned abruptly away, as if ashamed of the emotion that had crept into his voice. Randolph Crosby's keen eyes softened.

"Thank you, Tutney," he said quietly. "That means a great deal, coming from you."

He stretched out his hand, and Tutney grasped it firmly.

"Good-by, Mr. Crosby," he said huskily. He cleared his throat loudly. "I'm off to South Africa to-morrow. Got to look after things there a bit. Let me know if at any time I can be of service to you."

Crosby thanked him again, and his eyes followed Tutney with an expression almost of tenderness as the stocky man disappeared into the crowd. Then he resumed his walk toward the club enclosure. Unconsciously his shoulders had straightened and his head gone up.

At the entrance he saw the Porter Chadwicks, who, with the Crosbys, had lunched at the clubhouse before the races. Chadwick glanced in Randolph Crosby's direction and said something in an undertone to his wife, and they passed quickly through the wicket.

A quiet smile played around the corners of Crosby's thin lips, but the tired, cynical look in his eyes deepened. He stepped into the enclosure and almost ran into the arms of Griswold Peyton, who had been a classmate of his at Harvard, and was one of his most intimate friends. Peyton started violently and turned scarlet.

"Too—too bad—about the—race, old man!" he stammered. "Must speak to—Mrs. Phillips. See you again!"

He fled precipitately. A slight frown contracted Crosby's straight brows, and his lips tightened. He walked to where Elizabeth and Cary stood a little apart.

"Are you ready to go?" he asked his daughter. "I don't want to hurry you, but as the races are over—"

"Quite ready," answered Elizabeth.

She smiled joyously at her father, and her voice seemed brimming with the silver purity of the hermit-thrush. She put her hand through his arm, and they turned to leave the enclosure.

"Oh, Betsy!" A dark, vivacious face appeared at her shoulder. "I was so afraid you would leave before I had a chance to speak to you!" The speaker put out her hand to Randolph Crosby. "So sorry about the race!"

"Thank you, Trixie"; and Crosby's hand closed warmly over hers.

"Beatrix! Beatrix! Come here at once!"

The words came almost in a wail from a small, much-corseted woman in a purple *crêpe de Chine*, heavily trimmed with Cluny lace. An expression of anguish shone through the powder on her horrified face.

"She only calls me that on occasions of great urgency!" laughed Trixie. "I shall have to go; but remember, Betsy—you're coming to me at Lawrence for a long visit this summer. I won't be put off again!"

She pressed Elizabeth's hand, and with a nod to the men flew off to rejoin her mother.

"Mrs. Hunnewell seems rather upset," remarked Elizabeth wonderingly.

"Very much so," replied her father grimly. They started toward the exit. "Why, Humphrey!" he exclaimed, and then stopped.

A tall, fine-looking man with iron-gray hair and mustache looked at him coldly and passed without speaking.

Randolph Crosby's face whitened. With muscles so tense that they showed like cords through the skin, he walked to the waiting automobile. He stood back for Elizabeth to enter; then he got in and dropped down beside her.

"Coming, Fairfax?" he asked in a voice strangely unlike his own. "No? Well, drop in soon. All right, Foster—home, then!"

He settled back in his corner.

When the parlor-maid went into the library of the Crosbys' apartment the next morning and pulled up the shade, the sun fell full on the figure of Randolph Crosby, sunk deep in his big armchair. His head was turned a little to one side, as if trying to catch a sound that eluded him, and over his lips hovered the faint shadow of a smile, not cynical or sarcastic, but as if the pettiness of life and its sordid estimates had passed him by forever, and he had found again the one who had always understood.

II

MRS. GEORGE CROSBY sat at her desk in the morning-room, a pile of unpaid bills before her and a thin line of worry between her eyebrows. An indescribable atmosphere of unrest and weariness hovered about her, accentuating the traces of wear which years of struggle had left behind. The limp folds of her tea-gown hanging dejectedly around her stressed her dispirited appearance. The room, with its worn rug, soiled, cretonne-

upholstered furniture and shabby hangings, seemed to fasten upon her the imprint of hard usage, as if to revenge itself for her neglect of it by proclaiming aloud, in the privacy of the third-floor back, what she fought with desperate determination to conceal from the critical eyes of the habitués of her perfectly appointed drawing-room.

She pushed away the papers petulantly as her husband entered the room.

"Really, George," she exclaimed irritably, turning toward him, "I don't see how I'm going to meet this additional expense! I've a pile of bills here now that there isn't the least prospect in the world of my ever being able to pay, and some of the people are positively uncivil in their demands. Now, if I have to buy an entire mourning outfit, I don't see where I'm coming out!"

She looked at him in angry reproach.

"Too bad, old girl," returned her husband nonchalantly, sinking into a deep chair by the window and opening the newspaper he held. "But don't blame me—it isn't my fault!"

"Don't be absurd, George! Of course, Randolph's death isn't your fault; but I won't go to the length of saying that our being so strapped isn't!" Her eyes ran impatiently over his relaxed figure. "And I assure you I haven't the slightest intention of going to Newport this summer without the proper wardrobe. If I have to put on mourning—and I suppose I must, or people will talk, and they're doing enough of that as it is—it's got to be of the best. Cheap mourning is impossible; so you'll have to arrange to give me some money. Remember, it's your brother, not mine!"

George Crosby lowered his paper irritably.

"Upon my word, Maude," he exclaimed, "you might show a little feeling! The way you're acting is abominable. One would think Randolph had died on purpose!"

"How do you know he didn't?" rejoined his wife with acerbity. "No one seems to have the faintest idea why he died. Even the doctors can't agree. Half of them say something about his heart, and the rest talk vaguely about a stroke. For my part, I think the disgrace of that Steadfast affair was the cause."

"You mean?"

George Crosby gazed intently at his wife's face, haggard and worn without its customary make-up.

"Oh, George! Why do you make me go into details? You know as well as I that there was something wrong with the horse on Thursday, and it was pretty generally suspected that he had been tampered with. At all events, I saw some of Randolph's most intimate friends cut him dead as he was leaving the grounds, and Randolph was not the sort of man to stand that."

She looked meaningfully into her husband's startled face.

"Poor old Rand!"

George Crosby's voice shook. He turned his heavy eyes toward the window and stared, unseeing, at the backs of the houses opposite.

"It's horrid! The whole thing is perfectly abominable!" continued his wife in a tone of extreme exasperation. "Here I've gone to the expense of a complete outfit for the summer—"

Her husband jumped to his feet.

"Yes, yes!" he exclaimed irritably. "I'll get you the money somehow; but you'll have to make it go as far as possible."

"Trust me for that!" retorted his wife with a hard little laugh. "Years of training have taught me to get as much out of a dollar as one hundred cents will buy, and maybe a little more. I'm sick of it! I'm tired to death of having to plan and scrimp until even my fingers are beginning to look like claws!" She held out her crooked fingers before him. "How is it that Randolph had plenty of money and could live like a prince, while we've always been pinched to the last degree?"

George Crosby shrugged his shoulders and moved toward the door. It was not the first time the question had been put to him, and it aroused, even now, a feeling of antagonism against the brother whose inheritance had been the same as his own, but who had increased his property tenfold, while George's had steadily dwindled.

"Perhaps an extravagant wife and son have had something to do with it!" he flung back over his shoulder as he lingered on the threshold. "Well, poor Randolph can't enjoy his pile any more. What did you decide about Elizabeth?"

"She's coming to us, of course. She can't live alone, and if I have her under my eye I can perhaps keep away undesirables."

She looked full at her husband, who nodded understandingly.

"Quite right, Maude; the girl's a catch, and is bound to have a lot of attention. Much better to have her here. Will she go with you to Newport?"

"Oh, yes; she needn't go out, and Norman will be there to amuse her. I want the boy to take a good long rest this summer; he looks desperately thin."

"You can't lay that to overwork!" replied her husband with a short laugh. "Almost the only thing that ever brings him to the office is the urgent need of funds."

"Like father, like son!" murmured his mother. "I never noticed a deep love of work in you, either!"

"Maybe not, but my father wasn't so lenient as Norman's is, and I had to work when I was his age. You can't blame me for wanting to take life a bit easy now." He stretched luxuriously, and a self-indulgent smile widened the full lips. "After all, one only lives once, and at my age there aren't so many years left to enjoy."

Mrs. Crosby shuddered.

"I wish you wouldn't everlastingly keep referring to that extremely unpleasant subject. It's positively gruesome! We all have to die some time, of course, but there's no use in perpetually harping on the fact."

Crosby laughed again, lazily.

"Well, I'm off," he said, turning toward the stairs. "I want to get Randolph's affairs straightened out as far as I can before the hot weather comes." He paused once more. "Tell Norman I expect him at twelve—that is, unless it's too early for him," he added with an exaggerated air of concern.

But when Norman finally appeared in his father's office, George Crosby foresaw at once, from the haggardness of the boy's face, what the interview portended. These heated scenes had occurred with increasing frequency since Norman was fifteen, and were to be dreaded even more than the hardly less stormy encounters with the boy's mother.

Norman sank into the deep leather armchair that stood at the corner of his father's writing-table. Swinging one leg over the other, he began nursing his slender, silk-incased ankle.

"I'm in the devil of a hole, dad!" he began moodily.

"You always are, aren't you?" retorted his father, with a scornful look from under his thick eyelids.

Norman laughed uneasily.

"More or less," he admitted; "but this time it's no merry jest!"

"I have never found it so at any time," returned his father coldly.

Norman shifted his position uncomfortably. His bloodshot eyes were wandering about the room; finally they came back to his father's face.

"I've had hard luck," he began with an effort; "deuced hard luck."

"Yes?" George Crosby's tone was hardly encouraging.

Norman's eyes dropped to the Turkish rug which covered the floor.

"Well, what's the demnition total?" asked his father after a pause, attempting a face-tiousness which the tone of his voice indicated he was far from feeling.

"Fifty thousand," said the boy desperately.

"Fifty thousand! Good Heavens, boy, are you crazy?"

George Crosby leaned far out of his chair, his hands gripping the arms, his wide eyes for once alight, gazing incredulously into the sullen face before him.

Norman shook his head resentfully.

"Not yet, but I soon shall be, if this keeps on!"

"You—you!" retorted his father, his face ablaze with anger. "You'll have us all, your mother and me included, in the madhouse or in jail—I don't know which! And it's only yourself you stop to think of! Fifty thousand dollars! Do you realize what that means to me?"

The boy's face blanched, and his sullen expression deepened.

"How did it happen?" asked his father in a low voice, which he was evidently exerting his utmost will-power to control.

"Playing auction."

"Auction! What stake?"

"Fifty cents."

"Fifty cents a point?" An incredulous look stole over George Crosby's face. "You say you were playing auction for fifty cents a point?" Then, as no answer was vouchsafed, he added, as if to himself: "Just ten times my limit!"

For a moment neither spoke. A tense, living silence wrapped itself about them, which the monotonous hum of the city booming in through the open window seemed to accentuate.

"How do you expect to pay this debt of—er—honor?" queried his father at last, a sneer curling the corners of his mouth.

The boy crouched back in his chair, as if for support, and raised miserable, hunted eyes to his father's grim face.

"I don't know, dad," he whispered huskily, "unless—"

"Unless what?"

Norman swallowed hard. He roused himself from his half-reclining position, and his slender figure suddenly became tense with energy.

"See here, dad!" he began. "I've just heard of a wonderful proposition, perfectly safe, and a dead-sure thing."

His father looked at him suspiciously from under lowered lids.

"You've told me before of dead-sure things!" he retorted scornfully.

"But this one is absolutely on the level," Norman reiterated. "I happen to know the man who is at the head of it, and he swears that you would double your money in three months. What's more, he proved it to me."

"How?" asked his father laconically.

"It's a rubber company, formed to take over the Belgian interests in the Congo. At present prices rubber is a veritable gold-mine, and the demand for it is unlimited. They can't get enough on the other side, and you know how it's gone up here."

The color had come back into the boy's face, and his voice was quick and sharp. George Crosby eyed him in silence.

"How much money does he want?" he asked at last.

"Oh, a hundred thousand or so."

"My Heavens, boy! You talk as if I were made of money!"

Norman's eyes dropped from his father's to the writing-table before which he sat. It was strewn with papers. They lingered there for a moment; then he looked back at his father significantly.

"I thought—perhaps," he hesitated, "you might—be willing to invest some—of—Uncle Randolph's money—in it."

George Crosby turned violently toward the boy, who was tensely awaiting the result of his suggestion.

"Do you realize that that would be a State's prison offense?" he asked bluntly.

Norman's white face quivered.

"It's probably State's prison if you don't!" he retorted desperately.

"What do you mean?" The question came in a harsh voice strangely unlike George Crosby's usual suave tones.

"I mean this." The boy was evidently goaded to desperation. "I raised the check you gave me for five hundred to fifty thousand to pay Henry Armstrong, and I gave it to him last night."

George Crosby turned slowly back to the writing-table, and his gray head dropped into his hands. Lower and lower it sank until it fell on his outstretched arms, resting on the table.

Again that black silence folded itself about them. Once or twice a deep sigh broke from the bowed figure, and the broad shoulders shuddered.

"Good God!" The words seemed to have been wrung from him in spite of his efforts at restraint. "Good God!"

A frightened look stole over Norman's face.

"Don't, dad, don't!" he whispered huskily, rising and laying a shaking hand on the older man's shoulder.

"Don't touch me!" His father sprang to his feet, his eyes blazing, his drawn face working. "You thief!"

Norman swayed back as if his father had struck him, and a look as of an animal at bay crept into his face.

"You—you call me—that!" he breathed hoarsely. "*You!* Why, you don't know the meaning of the word honesty! Don't talk to me!" The words were tumbling out of his mouth in a frenzy of anger. "Why, ever since I was a kid I've heard you and mother planning and arranging how you were going to get out of paying your bills! And now *you* call *me* a thief!" The young man's voice rose almost to a shriek. "How do you expect me to be honest when I've been brought up never to pay for anything unless I had to?"

"Silence!"

George Crosby raised his hand as if to quell the torrent of words by force, if necessary. For a moment father and son glared angrily into each other's face; then, with a catch in his breath that was almost a sob, the young man's slight figure crumpled up and fell into the chair behind him.

His father sank into his armchair, and his face fell forward on his chest. His eyes, no longer languid, stared vacantly out of his strained, white face at the litter of papers

before him. It seemed as if some unseen spirit had cast a spell over him, robbing him forever of the atmosphere of youth which had long been the wonder and envy of his friends.

The consequences of the boy's act loomed dark and sinister over him; his son's words stung him with unanswerable force. He passed his hands in a dazed way across his eyes, as if attempting to brush away a mist that obscured them, and the papers scattered on the table began to assume shape. Mechanically he stretched out his hand and took up a neat bundle secured by a rubber band. He listlessly read the name on the wrapper.

Once more his head sank forward, and his eyes stared out before him, as if trying to penetrate the granite wall that concealed the future. A hunted look crept into them, and the grip on the packet tightened. He turned his head, but not his eyes, in the direction of the youth cowering in the depths of the big chair.

"You say you know the head of this—er—rubber concern?" he asked coldly.

The tense look on Norman Crosby's face lifted.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "It's Henry C. Hargis."

"Hargis! I know him. If you should happen to run across him, tell him I should like to talk to him."

He turned again to the table.

Norman rose. It seemed as if a heavy weight which had been crushing him had been removed, and he walked quickly to the door. With a backward glance toward the silent figure so absorbed as to be apparently oblivious to his existence, he slipped noiselessly out.

III

In the tasteful library in which her father's presence still seemed to linger Elizabeth Crosby wandered about, stopping now and again to touch tenderly some object that had been especially closely associated with him. In the week that had elapsed since his death she had emerged from girlhood into the fuller estate of woman, but there still lingered about her that exquisite trustfulness of childhood, produced by the protecting arm of a love that had enveloped her like a garment.

She picked up a photograph of her father,

the look of sad tenderness deepening on her pale face.

"My precious dad!" she whispered, passing her hand caressingly over the face. "I wonder if you know how I miss you! It's very lonely without you, dear."

She replaced the photograph on the table, her eyes blinded by tears, and groped her way to the armchair in which the last night of her father's life had been spent. Sinking down on the arm, she laid her cheek against the spot where his head had rested.

"If only I could—have been with you—through it—all!" she murmured brokenly. "I can't bear to think that you had to face it all alone, with no one that you loved to help you and say good-by. Oh, that's the bitterest part of it all! To think that you had to go without my being able to give you even a kiss, or one word to tell you how I love you! If only I could let you know how grateful I am for all the happiness you gave me, and all the sacrifices you made for me! And now you'll never know! Oh, darling, couldn't you come back for just one little minute, just long enough to let me hold you in my arms and kiss you good-by?"

A great sob shook her slender form. She sat up resolutely and pushed back the heavy golden coils of hair that had fallen over her forehead. A watery little smile played over the pale face.

"Father wouldn't like me to give way like this," she thought self-reproachfully.

She got up and walked toward the door, glancing at the clock on the mantel as she passed it.

"Nearly five!" she exclaimed under her breath. "I must hurry. Fairfax is due now!"

It still lacked a few minutes of the hour when the portières which separated the drawing-room from the library parted, and Fairfax Cary stepped into the room. In an instant Elizabeth's light footsteps sounded on the stairs, and she came into the library holding out both hands in warm welcome.

"How glad I am to see you!" she exclaimed as their hands met.

"It's so good of you to let me come!" he answered, his eyes devouring her face.

"Major Barry gave me your message."

"Dear Uncle Tod!" Elizabeth led the way to a roomy sofa and sank down into the corner. "He has been very good to me."

Cary dropped down beside her.

"He naturally would be. He idolized your father, and I know there isn't anything on earth he wouldn't do for him or for you. But tell me how you are."

"Oh, very well," she answered indifferently. The thrushlike lilt had gone out of her voice and great shadows lay under her eyes. "I'm a little tired, naturally; there's so much to be done." She glanced wearily around the room. "I'm giving up the apartment, you know."

Cary nodded sympathetically.

"That's a wrench, I'm sure."

"Yes," assented Elizabeth. "We've been here so long—ever since I was a little girl; and although it's only rented, everything is so associated with—father that I feel as if I were living in a perpetual parting with him." She resolutely forced back the great tears which had sprung to her eyes. "But Aunt Maude thinks I'm too young to live alone, so I'm to go to them. Uncle George is my guardian until I'm twenty-eight. I suppose they're right, but—" She sighed. Then she added in a sudden burst of confidence: "I wish the three years were over! You see, our ideas of what is worth while in life don't agree. It's going to be hard for me to see my friends, too; and I detest Newport!"

"It isn't just the thing for you this summer," agreed Cary. "Can't you persuade Mrs. Crosby to go to a quieter place?"

"Dear me, no! I shouldn't think of asking her. Imagine Aunt Maude cut off from her Newport season! She'd be like a caged lion!" A wistful look had crept into the girl's blue eyes. "Will you be coming down, do you think?"

"Certainly not to stay with the Crosbys," he replied, a smile twitching at the corners of his lips.

Elizabeth laughed a little uncertainly.

"I don't understand it," she said thoughtfully. "I don't see why aunt dislikes you; you are always so nice to her."

"She naturally thinks none but the most gorgeous butterflies should flutter around such a brilliant little candle."

A delicate flush crept into the girl's thin cheeks.

"How silly!" she exclaimed. "I don't think even Aunt Maude could be so absurd! No one could possibly think of you as a butterfly, and some day we shall all be trying to bask in the rays of your glory!"

Fairfax Cary laughed. Her praise and faith were very sweet to him, coming as they did after years of combat with obstacles the difficulties of which none but he had half realized.

"When that day comes—if it ever does," he said in a voice vibrant with feeling, "the glory will all be yours to do with as you like; for any success I may achieve will be entirely due to your faith in me and to your father's help."

Elizabeth raised her hand in protest.

"Oh, no," she denied vehemently. "It was your ability that first attracted father's notice; and as for my faith in you, if you had not had the qualities, the faith would never have been inspired."

She looked at him triumphantly, as if defying him to refute her argument.

An overpowering desire to catch her in his arms and tell her of the place she held in his life took hold of Fairfax; but she looked so young, so unprotected, as she half reclined among the cushions of the deep corner, surrounded by the evidences of wealth, that he crushed it back.

"What right have I to ask her to marry me?" he thought savagely. "She's lonely now, poor little girl, and she sees in me a man in whom her father believed, and who consequently has a sort of temporary glamour for her. Wait until you have something real to offer her, man! Even if she cares, it isn't right to take so much and give so little."

"When do you go to Newport?" he asked aloud.

"Next week. There are some legal matters to attend to and clothes to get." She looked significantly at her black frock. "There are always so many things to do after—"

"Yes, I know," Cary assented sympathetically. "If there is anything I can do, I'm sure you'll remember that I would consider it a privilege to be allowed to help you."

Elizabeth thanked him with a wan little smile.

"And I want to tell you," he went on gently, "that I shall always think of your father as 'one who dared do all that may become a man'—a man too fine to stoop to a meanness, too great of heart to profit through another's hurt."

Elizabeth looked at him gratefully, her

eyes brimming with tears. Impulsively she laid her hand on his arm.

"Ah," she murmured, "you were one of the few who really knew him for what he was!" Her chin quivered. "The rest"—she shrugged her shoulders sadly—"they mean to be consoling, but you—you're the first who has really comforted me."

Cary's hand closed warmly over her fingers, and his eyes looked fixedly into hers, as if trying to convey a message which the firm lips resolutely withheld.

"I shall miss you," she said sadly, withdrawing her hand.

Afraid to trust himself further, Fairfax rose.

"If at any time you need me," he said gently in his deep, even voice, "promise me that you will send for me!"

"I promise," answered Elizabeth readily.

"I want you to feel that you can call on me for anything at any time. Will you remember?"

"Yes," replied the girl, putting her hand in his. "Good-by!"

Her eyes followed the straight, thin figure, with its dark, proudly held head, as it disappeared into the hall, and a wave of desolate loneliness swept over her. Unconsciously she took a quick step after him and held out her hands, but the outside door closed softly. She stopped, and her hands fell to her sides.

IV

NOTWITHSTANDING Elizabeth's forebodings, the weeks that followed the Crosbys' move to Windy Bluff, their place at Newport, passed rapidly and almost happily for her. Of course there were times when the realization of what she had lost by her father's death overcame her with almost unbearable pain; but as day followed day she became more or less accustomed to the loneliness which at first seemed insupportable. She learned to watch the gay life about her with eyes that no longer shrank from the sight as from an overpowering light.

At first Mrs. Crosby had declined the invitations showered upon her, but by degrees she slipped back into the social swing, encouraged by the fact that Elizabeth seemed to take her going out as a matter of course. But the girl resolutely refused to enter into the pastimes of her aunt's pleasure-loving friends. She spent her time at the grand piano in the music-room, with a book on the

ocean-lapped rocks in front of the Crosbys' house, or working at the Red Cross branch which had been organized in town by Mrs. Maitland Andrews.

Her uncle and aunt treated her with affectionate consideration, not pressing her too hard when they found that she was adamant in her desire for seclusion, but making her feel that her presence was at all times a pleasure to them. It was only when Norman, after much letter-writing and telegraphing on the part of his mother, at last appeared at Windy Bluff that Mrs. Crosby interfered with the girl's wish for solitude.

"It isn't right, dear, for a girl of your age to spend so much time alone," she expostulated one afternoon when, after careful manipulation, she had succeeded in persuading Norman to ask Betty to take a sail with him in his sloop—an invitation which Betty had politely declined. "And then, too, Betty dear, Norman is very fond of you, and I think you might try to make his vacation pleasant. It's so long since he's had a chance to get any outdoor sport, and he needs the fresh air."

So Betty pinned on a wide-brimmed hat and accompanied her cousin to the little white boat bobbing serenely on the sparkling waters of the harbor.

"Betty," said Norman, after the sails had been raised and the boat had slipped away from her moorings, "do you like that?"

He indicated the fast-retreating shore with a toss of his head.

"What?" asked Betty innocently.

"That," and again he gave the contemptuous toss.

"Do you mean Newport?"

An amused look crinkled the corners of her eyes. Norman nodded and glanced up at the white sail stretching like a great wing above them.

"I do and—I don't," replied Betty thoughtfully. "As a specimen of social life, it's perfection; as a specimen of human life, it's—" She paused, and her face assumed an expression of deep seriousness.

"Rotten!" supplemented Norman understandingly. "Just what I think. How the mater can be so daffy about it is more than I can see. Dad, too—he's not so bad, of course; but in his inmost heart, in spite of the fact that he pretends it bores him, he loves it, too. Look out! You're going to jibe!"

Betty shifted the tiller, and the boat danced along on her course, leaving two curling white waves bubbling behind her. The rush of the exhilarating air on her face, the feeling of the boat under her controlling hand, brought a bright flush to her cheeks, and at least temporarily lightened the heavy burden of her sorrow.

"Now this—this is great!" exclaimed Norman enthusiastically. "You feel as if you were doing something! Gee, Betty, it's fine having you to play with!"

In the few days he had been with them his eyes had partly lost their hunted, blood-shot look, and his pasty cheeks had begun to fill out and glow with a semblance of health.

"You're such a bully sort," he went on. "You've a way about you that gets me—as if you had plenty of ballast aboard, and a gust of wind wouldn't be apt to capsize you!"

Betty laughed. In spite of his dissipations, she was fond of her cousin, for she realized intuitively that his weakness of character was largely due to his defective bringing up.

Immersed in the social life about them, his pleasure-loving parents had left the boy to the care of servants during the early part of his life, and to even less desirable companions, most of whom were unknown to them, as the lad grew into manhood. It was hardly to be wondered at that, with plenty of money, an inherited taste for excitement, and practically no supervision or restraining influence, he should have succumbed to the temptations which surrounded him.

"I suppose it's due to father," she answered. "He was so wonderful—so keen for a good time, and yet he always seemed to know just when to stop. 'Drink the top and leave the dregs,' he used to say; and, after all"—she looked brightly into the face beside her, with its weak chin and loose lips—"the top is good enough, without the nastiness of the dregs!"

"It's so hard to stop, though, when you once get started."

"I know," assented Betty gravely; "but that's where you show the stuff you're made of—whether you're just sand, or sand and cement."

She smiled gently into the boy's troubled face.

"But suppose—suppose the cement has been entirely left out of your make-up!"

Suppose you're just sand, and shifting sand at that, and suppose you don't even want to be anything else!"

Norman moved restlessly and wound the sheet he held around his thin hand.

"I can't imagine any one, even if he doesn't acknowledge it, not wanting to stand up against what he knows will sooner or later be his ruin. Father used to say that life was like any other business. Everything we do goes down in the day-book on either the debit or the credit side. Every once in a while we have to balance the book to find out how we stand in our bank-account. It must be a horrid experience to find one has overdrawn!"

The boy did not reply, and kept his head resolutely turned away.

"Betty," he said at last, "if you found out that some one you thought was on the level had played you a dirty trick, what would you do?"

"Some one I really cared for?"

Betty's eyes searched his face thoughtfully. Norman nodded, his eyes still fixed on the glistening expanse of water.

"Why, I don't know, I'm sure." Betty hesitated. "You'd have to take so many things into consideration—the reason the person had for wronging you, the motives, I mean. If it were done simply to injure you, why, of course, it would be hard; but if it were the result of some overwhelming force, some terrible temptation that had swept him off his feet, that would be different, and much easier to forgive. Why do you ask?"

She looked at him curiously. Norman moistened his dry lips.

"Oh, nothing! I was just wondering," he replied evasively.

When they got back to the house they found Mr. and Mrs. Crosby on the broad veranda, Mrs. Crosby busying herself with the tea things, which had just been brought in. In their absence George Crosby had returned from a flying trip to New York.

He looked unusually worn and exhausted. In the past few weeks he had lost weight, and his skin hung loosely on his cheeks. His eyes were hollow, and unnaturally bright and restless; and he had acquired a habit of tearing stray bits of paper, which his wife found extremely trying.

"There's a letter for you on the table, Betty," remarked her aunt, after a searching glance at the faces of the two young people.

Elizabeth picked up the letter, which was addressed in Beatrix Hunnewell's handwriting, and moved toward the steps leading to the ocean path.

"No tea?" called Mrs. Crosby.

"Not this afternoon, thank you, aunt."

A little flush had crept into her face, and her eyes were luminous. She walked quickly down the gravel path to her favorite spot among the rocks and, sinking down on a smooth stone, opened the letter. It ran:

DEAR BETSY:

When are you coming to us? I'm longing to see you, for I have so much to tell you that I can't very well write.

As I told you in my last letter, your friend, Fairfax Cary, has joined the club, and I'm seeing a great deal of him. We play tennis together nearly every afternoon, and he very often comes back with me to dinner. I don't know when I've met a man I admire so much. He's so entirely free from all meannesses, and has such a wonderfully broad outlook! He's coming this afternoon to take me for a ride in his new car, for he says it's too hot for me to play tennis.

I must stop now to dress. I want to look my best, for I find Fairfax very *exigeant*! Write soon.

As ever, affectionately,

TRIXIE.

As if scorched by a devastating heat, Elizabeth drooped against the rock behind her. The flush ebbed out of her face, and her eyes took on the pained look of a wounded fawn. The hand which held the letter fell into her lap, and she turned her eyes toward the harbor, where the gorgeous lights of the sunset lay reflected in molten masses of color. Great angry clouds obscured the sun, without entirely hiding it, as it sank slowly into their embrace; and a silence breathless with sinister expectancy hovered over the waters.

The scene before her accorded perfectly with Betty's mood, and a very passion of revolt seized her. Slowly her mind grasped the import of the letter. Its air of joyous possession of a new-found happiness stole over her like the insidious poison of a tropical plant, benumbing her senses, but leaving her brain alert. With it came the feeling that Trixie, in spite of her protestations of friendship, had taken advantage of her absence to appropriate that which she knew Betty prized above all else.

But did she know? A thin frown of perplexity fluttered over Betty's straight brows. Had even Betty herself known?

Scene after scene of her intercourse with Fairfax Cary sprang up vivid and lifelike before her, culminating in the hour that he had spent with her after her father's death. With a little start of surprise, she was forced to admit that even she herself had not guessed the nature of her feeling for him.

"What a fool! What a fool!" she murmured, clenching her hands impotently. "And now it's too late!"

A wild desire to test the sincerity of his promise to come to her at any time or place swept over her; but even as she planned the meeting she knew it would never take place.

For a long time she sat motionless, her pale face turned toward the fading light. Little by little the flaming brilliance softened into cool pinks and lilacs, melting at last into blue and neutral gray. And then, out of the shadows, as if hung by an invisible hand, shone the light of the evening star. Clearer and clearer it burned, with a steady effulgence that acted like balm on her wound; and at last a semblance of peace settled down upon her. With a little sigh she roused herself and walked listlessly back to the house.

In the privacy of Mrs. Crosby's boudoir a stormy scene had been taking place.

The International and Congo Rubber Company, in which, at Norman's suggestion, George Crosby had invested heavily, was not proving the gold-mine of promise. It was more like a bottomless pit which swallowed with avidity the funds fed to it, and demanded more with ever-increasing insistence. To save what he had already invested, George Crosby desperately staked all that he could lay hands on.

The last statement of the concern had been the reason for his hurried trip to New York, and the unsatisfactory conditions that he found on his arrival at the company's offices had caused his worst fears to be realized. Nearly all of Betty's fortune was already swept away.

He was pacing up and down the floor now, his face drawn, his eyes staring wildly from beneath his contracted brows. Mrs. Crosby sat tense and rigid in a big chair by the window, and her son leaned against the mantelpiece. Their faces were ghastly, and a frightened look lurked in Norman's eyes.

"George! How could you have been so foolish?" demanded his wife, her angry eyes fixed on her husband.

George Crosby turned furiously to her.

"For Heaven's sake, Maude," he exclaimed between his teeth, "try not to make it any harder for me than it already is! You know perfectly well why I did it—it was to save this young scoundrel from State's prison!" He pointed a trembling finger at Norman, who cowered under the lash of his words. "And now," he went on bitterly, "it looks as if I should have to take his place!"

"Can nothing be done?"

George Crosby spread out his hands hopelessly.

"I don't see any way out," he groaned, sinking into a deep chair.

The sight of his collapse galvanized Mrs. Crosby into action.

"Very well, then, I'll find a way!" she exclaimed grimly. "If you think I'm going to sit calmly by and accept the ruin you two men have brought on me, you have a very inadequate conception of my character. I decline to be either the wife or the mother of a jailbird!"

Both men shrank from the scorn in her voice, but neither answered her. Her husband took up an empty envelope and began feverishly tearing it to pieces, but at her "George, put that down!" he obediently laid the scraps in a neat little pile on the table at his elbow.

"How much of Randolph's money is gone?" she asked in a voice like ice.

"Practically all."

"You put everything into this rubber speculation?"

"All but the fifty thousand I had to refund the firm."

Norman shivered under the biting contempt in his father's voice and eyes.

"Well, Norman," said his mother coldly, "as far as I can see, as you are the one responsible for this catastrophe, you'll have to be the one to get us out!"

"How?" The word came in a husky whisper, barely audible.

"By marrying Betty."

Norman gave a hoarse, mirthless laugh and looked for an instant with haggard eyes into his mother's face.

"Marry Betty!" he jeered. "Why, that girl would as soon think of marrying me as

she would—" The words trailed off into nothingness, and his head sank forward on his chest.

"Why?" demanded his mother.

"Why? Because she knows I'm not fit to sit in the same room with her, much less marry her!"

"How does she know? Have you been such a fool as to confide you—er—escapades to her?"

"Hardly!" A sneer curled the boy's lips. "Give me credit for some sense!"

"You haven't led us to believe you had overmuch!" retorted his mother contemptuously.

The muscles of the boy's mouth tightened, and he glared for a moment at the pitiless face below him. Then he shrugged his shoulders impatiently and returned to his moody contemplation of the rug.

"There is nothing," Mrs. Crosby went on impressively, "that a girl of Betty's temperament likes better than to reform a man. I think if you could impress on her how much her influence could do for you, you would find that she was far from averse to marrying you. I know she's extremely fond of you. In fact, she told me so only this morning."

Evidently Norman doubted the truth of his mother's words; but, taught by long experience, he refrained from arguing the point with her.

"Did you ever stop to think that it's a pretty bum deal we're giving her?" he asked grimly.

"It's no time to think of that now," answered his mother impatiently. "She will surely marry some one, and there's no reason on earth why she shouldn't be as happy with you as with any one else—that is, if you choose to make her so."

"Perhaps she would," assented the young man dubiously. "But I can't help feeling sorry for her."

"Sorry for her! Sorry for her! Naturally I'm sorry for her, too; but—how about your mother?" broke in Mrs. Crosby hotly. "Aren't you sorry for her?"

Norman was silent. He knew that even the comparatively few years he had lived had made him unfit to be the husband of any woman. Genuinely fond as he was of Elizabeth, the idea of injuring her beyond what he had already done was repellent to him, realizing as he did that even her in-

fluence could not wean him from the life that had ensnared him.

He was on the point of declining to fall in with his mother's plans when his eyes fell on the stricken figure of his father, huddled in the big chair. George Crosby's face was gray with the unearthly pallor of a mortal illness, and Norman stared at him in remorseful silence.

"All right, mother," he said huskily. "I'll do my best."

He hastily left the room.

V

It was an unusually silent party that gathered around the softly lighted table for dinner that evening, and the conversation, in spite of Mrs. Crosby's efforts to enliven it, dragged perceptibly. Dish after dish left the room practically untouched, each one being so bent on concealing his or her lack of appetite that the same condition of the others passed unnoticed. But of the frequency with which Norman's wine-glass was refilled his mother was more observant; and at last she indicated, with an imperious gesture that brought immediate compliance, that he had had enough.

It was with a distinct feeling of relief that, the meal being ended, Mrs. Crosby rose and, drawing Elizabeth's hand through her arm, led the girl to the veranda, which was lighted by the uncertain rays of a swinging lantern. Sinking back among the cushions of a wicker sofa, she drew her niece down beside her.

"I feel as if I hadn't half told you how happy it makes me to have you here with us," she murmured, pressing Betty's arm gently. "You're very dear to me, child!"

A rush of tenderness swept over Elizabeth. Her parched soul, craving love with the intense desire begot by long denial, reached out with an inarticulate cry for the first demonstration of affection she had received since her father's death.

"Dear aunty!" she whispered brokenly, her hand clinging to the older woman's arm. "You're very good to me. I can never thank you enough!"

"No, dear," remonstrated her aunt; "it is I who should be the grateful one. You are filling the place in my heart of the little daughter I have always longed for. Sons are very nice, Betty, but a mother's heart is always empty, and her life incomplete, until

she has the warm sympathy of a daughter who understands in a way impossible to a man. I should love to feel that you were going to be with us always, that no one could ever take you away."

"No one ever will, aunty," whispered the girl tremulously.

The ache in her heart was becoming more and more unendurable, and she grasped eagerly at the home that she had accepted so reluctantly a few weeks before.

Mrs. Crosby gave her arm a gentle pat and then released her.

"That's right!" she exclaimed warmly; then, as the men came through the doorway, she added: "Now let Norman take you on the rocks; the moonlight is gorgeous on the water to-night. Norman, fetch a wrap for Betty."

Norman threw a scarf over Betty's bare shoulders, rising white and smooth out of the filmy black of her gown. She reluctantly accompanied him to the water's edge and sank down on the rock over which he had spread a rug. He dropped down beside her, and for a while neither spoke.

Betty's eyes were fixed on the path of moonlight which wavered on the dark waters. Her mind, wandering off to the Hunnewells' home, pictured Trixie and Fairfax Cary strolling along the paths of the rose-scented garden, or watching this same moon from the pagoda, with its curtain of fragrant honeysuckle.

Norman, too, seemed content to sit in silence, and puffed away vigorously at the cigar which apparently absorbed his attention. At last he spoke.

"Betty," he began hesitatingly, "could you—love—a man you didn't—respect?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, Norman," replied Elizabeth uncertainly. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I was just wondering how a girl like you would feel about that sort of thing—marriage, I mean, with a man who hadn't always—kept straight."

"Marriage!" breathed Betty almost fiercely. "I'm never going to marry!"

Norman gave a little snort of incredulity.

"Ha! That's what almost all girls say—generally just before they announce their engagements!"

"Well, in this case it's true," insisted Betty finally. "I haven't the least intention of marrying—ever!"

"If you thought it would help some one—help him to keep out of trouble, and all that—wouldn't you?"

There was a wistful note in his voice. Betty turned her eyes, in which the hurt look still lingered, to the recumbent figure of the boy beside her, his flushed face dimly visible in the uncertain light.

"Why do you ask?" she questioned wonderingly.

Norman turned impulsively to her.

"Just this, Betty. I can't seem to be able to—keep straight. I've tried my best, and I just can't do it; and I thought perhaps, if you could bring yourself to take me on—you're so strong, I know—I could stand out against it all. I'm sure I could! Oh, Betty, don't you think you could bring yourself to marry me?"

The words came out in a torrent of desperation. Betty looked at him as if, in spite of the fact that she heard them, their meaning had passed her by.

"Marry you?" she repeated vaguely.

"Yes, Betty—darling, I love you!"

He roused himself from his reclining position and, putting his arm around her, bent his head down to hers. His breath, heavy with wine and the smell of the cigar, sickened her, and she pushed him away almost violently.

"Don't, Norman, don't!"

Norman took away his arm and, leaning his elbows on his drawn-up knees, stared gloomily before him.

"Well, I can't say I blame you," he remarked morosely.

Something in the boy's humility turned Betty's feeling of resentment into one of contrition.

"But, Norman," she exclaimed, "it isn't that! Oh, please believe me! I'd do anything in the world to help you, but I couldn't marry any one I didn't love. Norman dear, you know I'm fond of you—really fond of you, but it isn't the same!"

"Do you think if I gave up drinking, and kept away from trouble generally, you could ever—"

But Betty shook her head emphatically.

"No, dear; it isn't the kind of feeling which, no matter how strong it grew, could ever turn into the love I must have for the man I'm going to marry."

For a moment neither spoke; then Norman said curiously:

"Have you ever known a man you could love like that?"

Betty did not reply, and nothing but the splash of the waves as they dashed impotently against the rocks at their feet broke the silence.

"Who was it, Betty?" asked Norman at last. "Was it Fairfax Cary?"

Betty started violently.

"Fairfax Cary?" she repeated in a startled voice. "Oh, no!"

"I'll bet it was!" declared Norman. "He's just the sort of guy who would get a girl like you. Well, I wish you joy of him! Awful prig, but he wouldn't keep you up nights worrying!" He got up and stretched himself lazily. "Well, me for bed! How about it, fair coz?"

Betty rose quickly to her feet and put her hand on Norman's shoulder.

"You're all wrong about my loving Mr. Cary, Norman," she said emphatically. "It's absolutely untrue. I don't care for him at all, except as a friend; but he isn't a prig, Norman. He's the finest—"

"All right!" agreed Norman indifferently, stooping to pick up the rug. "But don't get so stewed about it! I didn't say he wasn't."

They turned toward the house.

"It's no use, mater," he announced sullenly to his mother, after Betty had bid them good night. "Just as I thought, she's in love with that Cary chap."

"Did she tell you so?" asked his mother sharply.

"Not in so many words, but she showed it pretty plainly. He's just the kind of man she would fall for—always gassing about ideals and uplift and all that hot air. Any one could see—"

"Well," ruminated his mother, half to herself, "perhaps when Elizabeth learns that her father did not leave behind him the savory reputation she sets such store by, she will realize that his daughter may not hold the same attraction as she did for a man of Cary's stamp."

"What do you mean?" asked the boy fearfully.

"Never mind what I mean, Normie. Go to bed! I think before long your pretty cousin will be thankful to marry you!"

But it was well past midnight before Mrs. Crosby followed the advice she gave her son, and even then it was not to sleep. Hour after hour she lay staring at the moonlight

filtering in through the filmy curtains, and causing the familiar objects in the room to assume grotesque and, to Mrs. Crosby's tortured mind, vindictive shapes.

Enraged at finding herself entangled in a net which wrapped itself tighter and tighter about her, threatening her very existence, she groped about blindly, feverishly, to find the means of escape which she insisted must exist. It couldn't be that she, Maude Crosby, after all these years of comparative immunity—due to skilful manipulation on her part, she reminded herself—should come to grief because a girl, a mere child, opposed her will!

Keyed to its highest pitch, her mind reviewed the conditions that confronted her. Plan after plan formulated itself, only to crumble away at the fancied touch of the girl's hand. But at last a course of action presented itself which she thought would solve her difficulties, and she dropped off into a fitful doze.

The broad sunlight was streaming in through the open windows when she awoke and found her French maid standing by her bedside, a dainty tray containing Mrs. Crosby's breakfast in the girl's hands.

VI

THE sultry atmosphere that had enveloped the Crosby household during dinner lasted throughout the next morning, but Elizabeth did not suspect that she was even remotely the cause of it. Accustomed to her aunt's moods, which succeeded one another with such frequency and rapidity that Betty had learned to regard them with a more or less amused tolerance, she avoided Mrs. Crosby by spending the morning at the Red Cross rooms. But when the feeling of oppression lasted through luncheon, she began to fear that Norman had confided her rebuff of him to his parents, and that their changed attitude toward her was the evidence of their resentment.

When the meal was over she followed her uncle into his den, where he was generally to be found at times of domestic unrest.

"Uncle George," she began, pausing on the threshold.

"Come in, Betty," he replied from the depths of his leather chair. "Come in—I want to talk to you."

Betty dropped down among the cushions on the window-seat.

"That sounds nice!" she said with her bright smile.

Her uncle's likeness to her father had increased as the younger man lost weight, and with it his air of indolent ease; and in the months she had passed in his home, when she had learned something of the burden under which he labored, her affection for him had increased fourfold.

She watched him fondly as he reclined in his big chair, his head resting against the back, his half-closed eyes following the rings of smoke from the cigar that he had just taken from his mouth. Betty waited for him to begin; but as he did not seem inclined to open the conversation she remarked quietly:

"Uncle George, will you please give me five hundred dollars?"

The hand that held the cigar dropped nervelessly on the arm of the chair, and the cigar fell to the floor. Muttering something about inexcusable carelessness, her uncle stooped down and picked it up. When he straightened, and Betty saw his face, she was shocked at its appearance.

"Uncle, are you ill?" she asked, coming to him and bending solicitously over him.

"I'm all right, thank you," he replied huskily, and reached with a trembling hand for the match-box.

Betty leaned against the edge of the table beside him, and watched him doubtfully as he unsteadily applied the light to his cigar. Then she went on:

"Mrs. Maitland Andrews, the chairman of our Red Cross branch, is raising money for an ambulance to be sent to France, and I promised her five hundred dollars."

Betty made the announcement with the calm assurance of one who, never having been denied money in reasonable amounts, did not consider a refusal possible. George Crosby settled even deeper in his chair.

"Betty, I'm sorry," he began at last, "but until I get your father's affairs straightened out, I'm—I'm afraid—it's impossible, quite impossible for—me to let you have so—much money."

Betty looked at him, her blue eyes round with wonder.

"But, uncle," she expostulated, "father told me just before he died that he always kept several thousand dollars on deposit for emergencies, and that he never drew on that account."

"There have been some pretty heavy drafts on it lately, however—funeral expenses and outstanding bills that you asked me to pay at once," he reminded her.

"Yes, I know, Uncle George, but they couldn't have exceeded a couple of thousand dollars, and there must have been some income from the estate during the past months."

George Crosby's eyes fell before the girl's steady gaze. He examined the end of his cigar carefully.

"Betty," he said at last in a strained, hard voice, "I've been meaning to tell you about it for a long time, but I thought I would wait until—well, until you had got your strength back after the shock and grief of your father's death. There isn't any estate."

"No estate!" echoed Betty incredulously, bending toward him the better to see his face.

Her uncle shook his head, his eyes still fixed on his cigar.

"No," he went on. "Your father made unfortunate investments before he died, and practically his entire fortune was lost. It was thought that the shock and disappointment, and all that, were the cause of his death."

He replaced the cigar between his lips and drew deeply on it.

"I can't see how it is possible!" exclaimed Betty, clasping her hands piteously.

"My dear child"—George Crosby turned his haggard, twitching face toward her—"when you've lived as long as I, you'll realize that in the financial world it's generally the impossible that happens, especially in times such as these. Your father had the reputation of being a clever, hard-headed business man, but since I've been going over his affairs I've been surprised, and I may say shocked, to find the number of wildcat investments he made. Of course, in time some of them may be worth something, but at present—" He paused significantly, and for a fleeting instant his eyes sought hers.

"Then I'm a—pauper?" faltered Betty, her face white and frightened.

"Don't say that, dear child! You'll always have a home with us, of course, and the best we can give you; but I'm afraid five-hundred-dollar subscriptions will have to be cut out for the present at least. You understand, I know, that it isn't because I

don't want you to have the money, don't you, Betty?—but simply because it isn't there!"

He rose and put his arm around the drooping figure. Betty raised her white face to him.

"Thank you, Uncle George," she whispered tremulously. "You've always been very good to me, and I'm very grateful; but what hurts me"—her voice broke—"is that any one should think that father was involved in transactions that weren't—quite—"

"Don't let that worry you, my dear. The world is so used to heavy jolts after men die that such a thing is no longer even a nine days' wonder."

"Oh, but—but father was—different!" interrupted Betty almost fiercely. "He was not like that! Any one who knew him at all must have realized that he wasn't that kind of man. Why, he had the biggest heart and soul of any one I knew!"

"Bigness of heart and soul don't necessarily mean fulness of pocket, though," her uncle hastened to assure her, with a dubious shake of his head. "Quite the reverse! Well, I'll do the best I can, and perhaps, as I say, some of the investments will turn out better than we anticipate; but in the mean time we'll have to go a bit slow."

As if in a dream, Betty crept up to the seclusion of her room and sank into a rocking-chair in the deep bay window. She gazed out at the expanse of water roughened into whitecaps under the lash of a strong south wind. Benumbed and heavy-limbed, she watched the gulls as they poised against the currents of air, hanging suspended and almost motionless for an instant, and then with unerring precision swooping down into the dark water and reappearing with their prey dangling in their beaks.

Hour after hour she sat as motionless as if a freezing breath had turned her into ice. The shadows crept across the lawn to the water's edge, and still she sat with the look of pain deepening in her eyes.

It was almost dark when Mrs. Crosby knocked at the door, and without waiting for Betty's "Come in!" opened it and entered the room. She had just returned from a bridge-party at Mrs. Peyton Grenville's, and an air of antagonism emanated from her, as if the afternoon had not been a profitable one.

Mrs. Crosby was one of those people who lay their winnings to their own skill and their losings to the malice of fate, against which they protest long and loudly. This afternoon luck had been decidedly against her. She had come directly from the motor to her niece's room, and was unaware of Elizabeth's interview with her husband; but she had definitely made up her mind that the only way out of the difficulties which were closing in about them was through the marriage of Elizabeth and Norman. As Betty had long since learned, it was not well to frustrate Mrs. Crosby's plans.

"I want to talk to you a little, Betty," she began, sinking into the chair that her niece drew up for her and pulling off her long, white gloves.

Betty fixed her great eyes on her aunt's face in an almost visible effort to concentrate on her words. Inwardly she shrank from what she realized was in store for her; for Mrs. Crosby's face had the implacable look that meant:

"There's only one path to follow, and that follows me!"

"It's about Norman, dear," Mrs. Crosby went on. She was trying to untie the dotted veil which so cunningly hid the marks that time and worry had left on her face, and Betty jumped to her assistance. "Thank you, dear; you're such a helpful little daughter!"

She patted the girl's hand as she took the veil from her. Then she continued: "You know that boy is simply infatuated with you, child; he talks of nothing else, and this afternoon, before I left for Mrs. Grenville's, he told me again how much your influence has done for him."

"I'm very glad, Aunt Maude," murmured Betty dully.

"Men are strange creatures, Betty," her aunt went on. "Although they call us the weaker sex, it seems as if we women are continually obliged to make allowance for their failings, and to strengthen them in their hours of temptation. And, Betty dear, I don't suppose there is any higher vocation for a woman than that of saving a man from the purgatory in which he would end if it were not for her help." She stopped to study the serious face before her, and added playfully: "Don't look so solemn, child! A man's love ought to bring joy, happiness, and not sadness!"

The lines of Betty's face obediently relaxed into a pitiful attempt at a smile.

"I am glad, Aunt Maude," she reiterated.

"Then will you let me tell the dear boy so, Betty?" asked Mrs. Crosby, an exultant look stealing over her face. "He thinks you don't care. In fact, he told me so; and I should love to be the one to bring him the news that he's wrong!"

"He knows that I care for him, aunt, but—"

"But what?"

The question was like the crack of a gun.

"But"—it seemed as if the girl's white lips could not frame the words, but after a pleading look into her aunt's relentless face Betty went on desperately—"Norman asked me to marry him, and I—I can't!"

"Why not?"

Mrs. Crosby's voice was like ice.

"Oh, aunt!" Betty clasped her trembling hands piteously. "It's quite impossible—quite; you must see that!"

"I see nothing," answered her aunt uncompromisingly, "except that the boy loves you, and you are the one woman who could save him from—ruin!"

Mrs. Crosby's voice broke over the last word. This sign of unwonted emotion brought a throb of pity into Betty's throat and made her task even more difficult.

"But, Aunt Maude," she faltered, "before he—died, father made me promise that I would never marry a man I wasn't sure of or that he wouldn't have approved of. I don't think—in fact, I'm quite certain that he would not have wanted me to marry Norman."

"Your father was hardly one to assume the position of judge of men, my dear!"

The words came with a cutting emphasis that pierced the girl's brain like a knife.

"What do you mean?" she asked hoarsely.

"Just what I say. Your father's life was not so exemplary that he could afford to criticise those who were simply entering on the paths that he had already trod!"

Betty shrank back as if seared by a flame.

"Do you mean to insinuate that my father was dishonorable?"

"I insinuate nothing. I state"—Mrs. Crosby paused for an instant so that the full force of her words should strike home—"that Randolph Crosby, before he died, was publicly cut by his most intimate friends!"

As if unable fully to grasp the import of her aunt's words, Betty stared wide-eyed into her face.

"My father?" she gasped at last, a quiver of incredulous pain passing over her ashen face. "I don't believe it!"

Mrs. Crosby looked at her curiously. Such suffering as the girl exhibited at the assault on her father's name was incomprehensible to her. After all, what did it matter? But she was quick to see the advantage it gave her, and she followed it up with ruthless celerity.

"Well, whether you believe it or not, the fact remains that after Steadfast was so disgracefully beaten for the Withers Stake there was a great deal of talk about foul play, and I myself saw Humphrey Welsh and several others refuse to speak to your father. It was suspected that he had won a great deal of money on the race—much more than enough to offset the loss of the purse!"

All the rancor of the past months over her loss on the race, for which she had always blamed Randolph Crosby, came out in the bitterness of Mrs. Crosby's words.

Elizabeth drooped further into her chair, and the line of pain between her eyebrows deepened. As a flash of lightning reveals a scene in the darkness of the night, the picture of the club enclosure after the race rose before her. She recalled her own and Fairfax Cary's doubts as to Steadfast's running, and her father's tense face when he came back from his interview with Pat.

As a logical sequence came the remembrance of Mrs. Hunnewell's peculiar behavior when Trixie had joined them, and her insistence that the girl should return to her at once. There was evidently some truth behind her aunt's words, but that her father was in any way connected with anything that bore the least resemblance to crookedness she resolutely refused to believe.

Mrs. Crosby evidently realized that she had said enough, for her manner softened almost to tenderness.

"Forgive me, child, if I've hurt you," she said gently; "but your words struck me in a very vulnerable place. When her only son is attacked, a mother naturally resents it. Your reflections on Norman's character goaded me into doing what I long ago decided I would never do—let you know the estimation in which the world

held your father before his death. You see, it would hardly be possible, under the circumstances, for him to object to Norman as a son-in-law!"

She smiled sweetly at the girl; but Betty, her face drawn and rigid, continued staring fixedly at her aunt. She did not relax when the older woman rose, and, laying her hand on her niece's shoulder, leaned over her and said:

"Well, may I take a little ray of hope to the dear boy?"

In a voice that sounded as if it came from a great distance, Betty responded:

"I shall never marry any one—now!"

Mrs. Crosby raised her eyebrows despairingly. She withdrew her hand and moved toward the door.

"I hope in time you'll feel differently," she remarked. "By the bye, Mrs. Goodhue has just returned from Lawrence, and she told me this afternoon that your little friend Trixie Hunnewell is engaged to Fairfax Cary."

Betty did not reply, so Mrs. Crosby passed out into the hall, the perplexed frown lingering around her eyes.

VII

LIKE a wounded thing stricken unto death, Betty sat alone, hardly aware that her aunt had gone. Her great eyes, distended and dark with pain, gazed out into the fading twilight. She was forcing her mind back over the events which just preceded her father's death.

Scene after scene presented itself vividly to her, like little pieces of mosaic which fitted accurately into one another; and at last a completed picture was disclosed which solved problems hitherto inexplicable. The sudden falling away of people whom she had thought her friends, and whose unsympathetic bearing at the time of her sorrow had puzzled and hurt her beyond words; the coolness of others with whom she had unavoidably been brought into contact—the revelations of the afternoon explained it all.

The twilight deepened into night, and still she sat motionless, staring out into the dark, her brain groping through the maze of memories for the image of her father. Her brow contracted as she struggled to visualize the presence that always seemed to linger near her. When at last she succeeded,

and the cold, keen-eyed, rather cynical face was outlined against the dark clouds of doubt that her uncle and aunt had raised, her lips trembled into a happy smile of restored confidence.

She rose stiffly and switched on the light. Going to the writing-table, on which stood the large picture of her father, she took it up and looked tenderly into the stern face. Unflinchingly the keen eyes returned her gaze until the questioning expression in her eyes turned into one of perfect trust, and the taut lines of her face relaxed.

"No matter what they say," she whispered softly, "I shall always believe you were as true as steel!"

At her words the eyes seemed to soften into the look of tenderness they had always held for her.

Her eyes wandered from the photograph to the dainty things about her—the flowered chintses, the tasteful furnishings, the pretty French prints, their wires concealed by shirred ribbons surmounted by a bow; the glass-topped dressing-table with its array of silver-backed toilet articles; the inviting bed where she had passed so many restful nights. The conviction came over her that she could no longer remain a member of that household.

But where to go? She knew her world too well not to understand that the homes where the daughter of the prosperous Randolph Crosby was so eagerly welcomed would be closed to the child of the discredited outcast. But though no alternative suggested itself to her, the fact remained glaringly apparent that it was impossible for her to stay at Windy Bluff.

A knock sounded at the door, and Marie, the French maid, asked if she could be of any assistance to *mademoiselle*. Betty replied that as she had a headache she did not want any dinner and would not need her again that night. Then she locked the door quietly, drew out a suit-case from the depths of the closet, placed the photograph of her father carefully in it, and began hurriedly packing it with things from the closet and drawers. Every now and then she glanced at the little gilt clock on the mantel, feverishly ticking the minutes away.

She took off the white muslin she had worn all day, and put on a black suit and a hat, over which she tied a heavy veil. Then, with a final lingering look about the room,

she turned off the lights, picked up the suitcase, and opened the door.

After listening intently for a moment, she stole along the corridor and down the stairs to the large hall below. Subdued voices came from the dining-room, but the drawing-rooms were deserted, and Betty made her way unnoticed to the front door. Opening it softly, she crept out into the friendly darkness. Fearful lest the gravel of the drive should betray her flying footsteps, she sped across the lawn toward the entrance gates, and with a deep sigh of relief passed between them into the highway beyond.

The moisture-laden wind was blowing in fitful gusts that gave promise of rain in the near future, and Betty quickened her pace once more. She kept her eyes anxiously alert for a conveyance that would take her to her destination, for the suitcase increased in weight with every step and seriously impeded her progress; but at that hour all the public hacks were in demand to take diners-out to the homes of their respective hosts, and Betty did not dare to ask a lift in any of the returning private motors, for fear that the chauffeurs might recognize her.

Notwithstanding the fact that she was thankful for the protection the darkness gave her, she started violently at every unusual sound. Once or twice she had to stop, rest her suitcase on the ground, and lean for support against a railing or tree until she recovered her breath sufficiently to be able to go on.

It was with an involuntary "Thank Heaven!" that she at last spied the bright lights of the wharf, which revealed the shadowy hulk of the boat alongside. A continuous ebbing and flowing stream of dark figures passed up and down the gangway, and Betty, realizing that not many minutes remained before the hour for starting, hastily made her way to the ticket-office and procured her passage for New York.

As she passed down the corridor—through which white-coated stewards were hurrying, calling vociferously, "All ashore! All ashore!"—she came face to face with Mrs. Maitland Andrews. Mrs. Andrews stared at her doubtfully for a moment, trying to penetrate the heavy veil. Then, as Betty tried to edge past to her stateroom, she exclaimed, laying her hand on the girl's shoulder:

"Aren't you—why, yes, you *are* Betty Crosby!"

Realizing that it was impossible to escape recognition, and anxious to explain to Mrs. Andrews her inability to make good her promise in regard to a donation for the ambulance, Betty drew the older woman into her stateroom.

"Would you mind coming in for a minute?" she pleaded. "I want to tell you—"

Perceiving from the tremulous tones of the faltering voice that something was amiss, Mrs. Andrews readily accompanied the girl.

"Why, of course, dear," she responded heartily. "We'll have a nice talk—not a soul to interrupt us!"

Betty untied her veil and took it off before she spoke again.

Mrs. Andrews's rôle of confidante to every sort and condition of man occupied almost all the time that she did not spend at the board-meetings of the many societies she practically ran and supported. Bishops and newsboys, great financiers and débutant girls, poured their difficulties into her sympathetic ears, and went away strengthened by her sound counsel. Betty had always been an especial favorite with her, and with open arms she had welcomed the girl into the Red Cross work, knowing that it was the most effectual means of alleviating her sorrow.

It was with deep concern that she noted the ghastliness of the young face and the tightly compressed lips. She settled herself comfortably on the lounge and, in order to give Betty time to compose herself—for she saw that the girl had difficulty in beginning—remarked beamingly:

"I'm going to New York to order the ambulance. Isn't it splendid? All the money has been promised, and I want to get it off at once."

A tremor passed over Betty's face.

"That's what I want to tell you," she began impulsively, laying her hand on Mrs. Andrews's arm. "I can't—it's impossible for me to give you the money I promised this morning."

Mrs. Andrews placed her hand gently over the girl's.

"That's all right, dear; it won't matter in the least. It'll come in from somewhere—it always does. Please don't fret about it!"

Two great tears overflowed Betty's eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

"I was afraid you wouldn't understand," she whispered tremulously. "I was afraid you might think I wanted to pose as being very generous before all those women this morning and then back out in private; but I thought I had the money, and—and it isn't there!"

She caught her lower lip in her teeth in an attempt to still its trembling. Mrs. Andrews took the girl's hand between hers and began stroking it gently.

"Tell me all about it, dear; perhaps I can help you."

But Betty shook her head hopelessly.

"No one can help, as far as the money goes. It's all gone—every penny of it. Apparently father made investments that didn't turn out well, and instead of being a rich man he was quite the reverse. I'm on my way to New York now to look for something to do."

"Have you left your uncle's for good?"

Betty nodded.

"I couldn't possibly stay—there were conditions that made it quite out of the question. Not that Uncle George wasn't perfectly sweet, and told me that they always expected me to make my home with them, but—"

"I understand," answered Mrs. Andrews gravely. "You don't want to be under obligations to them. Sometimes it's like that, and the obligations keep mounting up and mounting up until it seems as if they would crush you, no matter what you do in return. It's much pleasanter to stand on your own feet, even though it means hard work. What sort of place are you thinking of taking?"

Betty turned a wan little face, over which flickered a watery smile, to the older woman.

"Beggars can't be choosers," she said bravely. "I'm ready to take anything."

"Have you had any training?" asked Mrs. Andrews. "Stenography, typewriting, or any of those things? So many of the girls have been taking them up lately as a sort of fad."

Betty shook her head dispiritedly.

"Father wouldn't let me take up anything like that. He said that I would never have to use it, and that it was a waste of time and energy. The only thing he let me do was a course in Red Cross first aid and

home nursing, which was a thing he said every woman should know; but, of course, that's just the thing that won't be of any use to me now, with so many trained nurses about!"

A look of deep dejection settled over her, and for a moment they sat silent, listening to the ceaseless pulse of the engines as the boat forged its way into the dark.

Mrs. Andrews rose and, placing her hands on Elizabeth's shoulders as she stood beside her, said gently:

"I'm very glad I ran across you. I want you to go to bed now, and to sleep, mind you—no lying awake thinking and worrying! To-morrow things will look brighter—they always do. Promise me!"

Elizabeth's face darkened as if a dense cloud, the forerunner of a storm, had passed over it.

"Ah," she said passionately, "you tell me not to worry, but how can I help it when people are saying such dreadful things about my father?"

"Are they?" asked Mrs. Andrews thoughtfully. "I haven't heard anything, but then I don't often hear slander. People know it isn't exactly in my line." The even tones were a trifle contemptuous. "Or perhaps," she added whimsically, "they knew it wouldn't be any use. You see, child, I happened to know your father!"

She stooped and kissed the girl impulsively. Betty clung to her a moment, unable to speak; then her arms dropped, and she smiled bravely into the other's face.

"Good night," she whispered tremulously, "and thank you again and again!"

"Now remember, no worrying!"

Mrs. Andrews shook her finger playfully as she disappeared through the door. And, strange to relate, Betty, worn out and exhausted, followed her advice and slept peacefully throughout the night, a pitiful little smile hovering over her lips.

VIII

It was fully a month after Elizabeth's return to New York when Fairfax Cary ran across Major Barry in the Pennsylvania Station as they were hurrying to their respective trains. At the risk of missing his connection, the major laid an arresting hand on Cary's arm.

"Have you seen Betty Crosby lately?"

he asked hurriedly. Then, as Fairfax shook his head, he added: "She's disappeared—can't be found anywhere. Her uncle's nearly distracted. When can I see you?"

"To-morrow at eleven, at my office," responded Fairfax, and they parted precipitately.

It was only when Fairfax was speeding through the cool tunnel under the river that he began to grasp the full import of the major's words. Betty Crosby gone! Without a trace! It was inconceivable! Things like that didn't happen in the set in which she moved. After her promise to him, too! No, he absolutely refused to believe it.

But the more he dwelt on the major's news, the deeper grew his concern. That she should leave the uncongenial atmosphere of the Crosby home did not surprise him, but that she should go without telling any one of her destination gave him, in spite of his determination not to credit the report, a feeling of extreme disquietude.

"There must have been an upheaval of some sort," he thought grimly. "Mrs. Crosby's a pretty difficult proposition at best, and she probably played on the child's nerves like a rasp. Can't say I blame her for cutting it all; but why in thunder didn't she let the rest of us know?"

It was this same question that he put to Trixie Hunnewell when they met on the club veranda as soon as he had succeeded in drawing her away from the group of people with whom he found her; for, as he speedily learned, she was in as deep ignorance as Major Barry and himself as to Elizabeth's whereabouts.

"She promised me before she left town that she would call on me if she was ever in trouble," he said, adding ruefully, half to himself: "As I knew mighty well she would be before long! And Betty Crosby's not one to break a promise."

Trixie eyed the tense, troubled face thoughtfully, and a feeling came over her that perhaps, in some way, she had been the cause of that broken promise. She realized that her letters to Betty had been full of Fairfax Cary. It was highly probable that Betty had imagined, as she herself had believed, that Cary's attentions were of a different significance from what it now appeared was their real character. For Trixie had come to see that her attraction for him lay in the fact that she was Eliza-

beth's friend and in constant communication with her.

"If it were really that way with them," she thought self-reproachfully, "I'm afraid Betsy felt that I wasn't very true to her; but why didn't they tell me? I certainly had no way of guessing!"

But her contrition only added to her concern, and made her even more desirous of aiding in the search.

"I shall depend on you to let me know how I can help," she told Fairfax when he left her. "I shall be on tenter-hooks until I hear what Major Barry has to tell you to-morrow."

That the intervening hours had been trying for Fairfax, too, was evident from the alacrity with which he rose to greet the major on his entrance into Cary's private office as the clock struck eleven the following morning.

"Sit here, major," he said, indicating a chair on the other side of his flat desk.

Major Barry laid his hat and cane carefully on the desk and sat down. His usual cheery expression had given place to one of deep seriousness, and he nervously fingered his eye-glasses on their broad black ribbon.

"The first intimation I had of this," he began without preliminary, "was two days ago, when I met George Crosby at Delmonico's. He looks like an old man. Have you seen him?" Fairfax shook his head, and the major went on: "You know how the Crosbys have always held themselves—as if there wasn't any one quite good enough—you know—just manner, of course, but—well, it's all gone as far as George is concerned. He has positively crumpled up! I thought he'd been ill, and stopped to hear about it, but he insisted he was all right. It was only when I inquired for Elizabeth—you know I'm her godfather, always was very intimate with Randolph and his wife—you knew, of course?"

He fixed his kind, candid eyes on Cary's face. Fairfax nodded understandingly. He had heard of the major's romance—how the two men had loved and courted the beautiful Helen Rogers, and how, when Crosby had succeeded in winning her, the major—or captain, as he then was—had laid his hand on Randolph's shoulder and said:

"You win, old man! Just as well, I guess; an army post's no place for a girl

like that! But if you don't make her happy, by gad, sir, you'll have to answer for it to me!"

And when at the end of a year she had died, leaving the little flaxen-haired miniature of herself to take her place, the two men had accepted the trust that was confided to them and lavished the deepest tenderness and care on the little maid.

"She isn't quite sure which is her real father," chuckled Randolph when, on her third birthday, Barry had "dropped in as he happened to be passing," as he put it, and Betty held out her arms to him with a gurgle of delight. He "happened to be passing" so often those days that it had come to be a joke between the two men.

"All right, old man, I understand—you just keep on," Randolph had said with a slap on the back as he handed the major his glass of whisky-and-seltzer. "Between the two of us she may get one fairly decent father!"

And Tod Barry had laughed, and said that he was willing and anxious to contribute his share. So it was evident from the major's manner, as he sat in Cary's big chair and twirled his eye-glasses, that Betty's lack of confidence had hurt him to the quick.

"It is strange she didn't communicate with you," mused Fairfax.

"I can't understand it—it makes me afraid the child has come to some harm."

Barry moved uneasily, and began beating a tattoo on the edge of the desk with his carefully kept nails.

"Did you find out the reason for her leaving?" asked Fairfax anxiously.

"Some family trouble, as far as I can make out from what George said. I couldn't really get at the facts, but George hinted something about Norman's wanting to marry her. Evidently Betty wouldn't have it—you know what a miserable, dissipated little cur he is, and I suppose Mrs. George cut up rusty and made it unpleasant for her; so she just left one night, taking a suit-case full of clothes, and they haven't heard of her since."

"Well, at all events, there's satisfaction in the knowledge that she has plenty of money," commented Cary.

"That's just the rub! Has she?" put in the major impatiently. "George as good as told me that Randolph's affairs were

pretty well involved when he died. He intimated that Elizabeth had gone off with the idea of supporting herself. Imagine—Betty!"

"But I don't understand!" Fairfax exclaimed. "Randolph Crosby's fortune gone? Why, it's impossible! I know too well—"

The major looked at him attentively.

"Did you know anything about his investments?"

"Well, not such a great deal. Mr. Crosby was too reticent a man, too self-reliant, to confide anything more than was absolutely necessary, even to his lawyer, and of course I did only a small part of his legal work. But, from what I saw of his holdings and from my knowledge of the man, I should say that what you suggest is a rank impossibility."

The two men eyed each other thoughtfully.

"Is George Crosby sole trustee?"

In his effort to make it unconcerned, the major's voice sounded strained and unnatural.

"Sole trustee and guardian, so Miss Crosby told me."

"Humph!" The major was carefully examining the spring of his eye-glasses. "Cary," he said at last, looking directly into the dark, keen face across the desk, "I think it's time Elizabeth Crosby's friends took a hand. As her godfather, I feel a certain responsibility in regard to her, and I ask you to assist me in whatever search it is necessary to make to determine the child's whereabouts and the condition of her affairs."

"I will gladly do anything in my power, Major Barry. As you know, or perhaps you don't know, everything that concerns Miss Crosby concerns me very deeply."

Major Barry looked at him sharply.

"Why the dickens, man, didn't you tell her so?" he exclaimed. "Then all this would have been avoided!"

But Fairfax shook his head positively.

"She knew, or at all events she must have guessed; but I couldn't ask her to marry me when I had practically nothing to offer her."

"Good Lord, Cary, you had a fine young man and a fine old name to offer her! What more could any girl want?"

"Thank you, major. It's very kind of

you; but even if it were true, that's not enough for a girl like Elizabeth Crosby!"

"It's enough for any girl, especially for one of Betty's stamp. Why, every bit of this would have been avoided!"

"You speak as if you think she would have taken me!"

There was a badly concealed tremor in Cary's voice, and the hand that held the pencil with which he was scrawling illegible words on the pad before him shook visibly.

"Take you! Why, man, are you blind? Self-depreciation is one thing, but imbecility—there, there—"

He stopped and looked quickly at Cary, evidently afraid that he had gone too far; but the radiant expression on Cary's face told him that he could have continued indefinitely in the same strain.

"Cary," he asked abruptly, "have you heard anything derogatory to Randolph Crosby since he died?"

Fairfax Cary paused for a moment before answering, his eyes wandering to the tall buildings pressing closely in on his only window, a look of seriousness driving away the happy light in the dark eyes. He turned back to the major and nodded regretfully.

"I was with them when they left the race-track that afternoon, and I saw several of Mr. Crosby's friends refuse to speak to him. Afterward I tried to find out the reason for it. As far as I could learn, it was pretty generally conceded that his horse, Steadfast, had been doctored—"

The major inclined his head.

"And of course the blame was laid on him, in spite of the fact that he lost the purse!"

"They claimed that he had more than offset that."

Again Major Barry nodded.

"Well, of course I don't believe a word of it—don't see how any one could who knew the man; but the question is, how can we prove it's false? I'm not satisfied to let the good name of my best friend and the father of that child go down to posterity blackened. We've got to clear it, and we've got to find Elizabeth! Now, what do you suggest?"

"Have any steps been taken?"

"George Crosby has employed a private detective, but they're so afraid of people's talking, and of a scandal, that they're tre-

mendously handicapped. You see how it was with me—I only learned by chance."

"I think I'll go and have a talk with Pat," ruminated Fairfax. "The boy may be able to tell us something. You know, one of the last things Mr. Crosby did before he died was to send the boy enough money to make up what he lost on the race. Pat told me about it just after the funeral. He was all broken up. It seems he has a sister who is a bit of a high-flier, from all I hear, and he's very anxious to establish her somewhere away from the track influences. He had saved enough money to give her a start, but he lost most of it when Steadfast was beaten, so you can imagine his gratitude at Mr. Crosby's generosity."

"Just like Rand!" The major's face twitched. "Well, let me know what you learn."

He rose and took up his hat and stick.

"I will, Major Barry. Could you meet me at the Sussex Club to-night at, say, eleven o'clock? I can't tell just when I can see Pat."

The major assented, and the hands of the two men met in a firm clasp.

IX

As soon as he was alone, Fairfax despatched a letter to the jockey's headquarters at Sheepshead Bay, and spent the rest of the day in impatient perturbation awaiting his reply; but when the answer came, it was a hurried scrawl from his sister.

DEAR MR. CARY:

Pat's been hurt awful bad in the steeplechase this afternoon. Come as quickly as you can.

MOLLY DELANEY.

Fairfax grasped his hat and rushed to the elevator. When he reached the street he jumped into a taxi and told the chauffeur he would double the fare if he reached the Pennsylvania Station in time for the six seventeen train. Fairfax got his train and the man his fare, and the young lawyer settled himself with as much patience as he could command to pass the interval which must elapse before he could reach Pat.

Molly had evidently left word at the office of his coming, for when Cary reached the cheap hotel where the Delaneys had their rooms a small boy took him in charge. The guide conducted him at once up the

steep stairs and down the narrow hall lighted by a flaring gas-jet which disclosed the gilt and green wall-paper disfigured by great spots of mold. The boy indicated a door on the right.

"He's in there!" he said in a hoarse, terror-stricken whisper and fled precipitately.

Cary knocked softly, and the door was immediately opened by a thin youth with furtive eyes.

"It's him!" said this individual in a sepulchral voice and disappeared into the corridor.

Cary stepped into the dim room and closed the door. On the iron bedstead he could just distinguish the indistinct outline of the jockey's figure. Out of the bandages that swathed his head burned two bright eyes, feverishly restless. He pressed the boy's hand as it lay motionless on the counterpane.

"I'm very sorry for this, Pat!" he said gently.

A little smile stole over the blanched, freckled face.

"The jig's up, I guess, Mr. Cary. That steeplechasin's pretty sure ter git us sooner or later. Mr. Crosby wouldn't never let me do it, but— Well, I'm mighty glad ye got here in time. I've been wantin' ter see ye."

A spasm of pain passed over his face.

"Are they doing everything they can for you?" asked Cary, bending solicitously over him.

"Oh, yep! Sit down, Mr. Cary. I told Jim ter put a chair fer ye; ain't he done it?" Then, as Cary sat down, Pat went on faintly: "They had a couple of doctors here, an' they patched me up some, but there ain't nothin' ter be done, I guess. Kind o' tough, ain't it? I'd 'most got me pile tergether fer that little home fer Molly. I don't like the way things is goin'!"

For a moment he searched the sympathetic face before him, and then, as if satisfied with what he saw, he continued confidentially:

"Mr. Norman's begun hangin' round again. He's in there with her now." With a quick glance of his eyes he indicated the door opposite the bed, whence issued the low rumble of a man's voice punctuated by the shrill tones of a woman. "I don't like it!" he concluded hoarsely. "When gents like him comes followin' up girls like Molly,

ye kin jest betcher sweet life it ain't fer no good!"

"Has it been going on for long?" asked Cary.

"Off an' on. He went ter Newport fer a while, an' I wuz hopin' it wuz all off, but fer the past few weeks he ain't hardly lef' her fer a minute. Now ye kin see why I wuz so set on gettin' a quiet little place off somewhere. Race-tracks ain't no place fer a girl. If I could only ha' got that fixed, an' ha' felt Steadfast under me once agin, it wouldn't ha' been so hard ter go. Gee, Mr. Cary!" A film came over the bright eyes. "Ye don't know how I felt ter see that lout Burns ridin' that hoss! Why, he's got hands like a plowman!"

"I'm sure it must have been hard," Cary said softly. "I want to ask you about Steadfast and that race for the Withers Stake, Pat. Have you ever suspected that there was anything wrong with the horse that day?"

"Yer mean he'd been doped? I didn't think so then, Mr. Cary; but lately, from things Molly's let drop, I've kind o' suspicioned—well, I dunno. Ye see, when a girl gits jealous, she says all kinds o' things. When Mr. Norman went off ter Newport, Molly got it inter her nut that he wuz rushin' some queen there, an' one night she had sort o' high-strikes, an' she said if he wuzn't goin' ter make good she'd peach. Then she said somethin' about what happened before the Withers race; but all of a sudden she stopped, an' I couldn't git nuttin' more out o' her."

The weak voice trailed off and stopped, and the eyes closed.

A feeling of compunction came over Cary. He could see that the boy's strength was ebbing very fast, but he felt that he must do all that he could to get some clue to the mystery of Elizabeth's hiding-place.

"Pat," he said, bending over the limp form, "do you know where Miss Crosby is now?"

"Miss Crosby? Miss Betty?" The blue eyes opened suddenly and stared into his. "Why, ain't she at Newport?"

Cary shook his head.

"She left about a month ago."

"That's queer! Don't he know?"

Pat glanced meaningly at the door between the two rooms. Again Cary shook his head. Pat stared thoughtfully at him.

"Well," he said at last, "it ain't fer the likes o' me ter be sizin' up gents like Mr. George Crosby an' Mr. Norman; but in me own mind I allays puts 'em in a pretty low class, an' I knows Mr. Tutney thinks the same. I ain't a bit surprised she couldn't stan' 'em!"

"Tutney?" repeated Cary. "Barney Tutney?"

"Yep; owns them big diamond-mines in South Africky—least, him an' Mr. Crosby does together."

"Where can I find him?"

"Dunno jes' where; he's down there now, wherever they are."

"I wonder how I can get hold of him!" mused Cary.

The boy's head moved restlessly on the pillow. The short twilight had darkened into night, and the little room was shrouded in shadows. Outside, an indistinct murmur of voices floated up from the group of youths that Cary had noticed standing on the bedraggled plot of grass before the hotel steps, but the words were indistinguishable.

"Mr. Cary!" came in a frightened whisper. "Mr. Cary! Are ye there?"

"Yes, Pat; what is it?"

Cary's hand closed over the cold fingers.

"I thought ye'd gone!" There was a world of relief in the weak voice. "It's all right—only I wuz kin' o' lonesome. I s'pose I wuz light-headed fer a minute, an' I thought I wuz alone. It's kind o' hard ter die when ye ain't never really lived!"

Cary bent over the slight figure, motionless in the glow of the electric light which flickered up from the street below.

"Is there anything you'd like me to do for you, Pat?" he asked gently.

"If ye could—I don' hardly like ter ask it o' ye, but ye're so kind—if ye *could*"—there was infinite entreaty in the ashen face—"look after Molly a bit? Ye see, there won't be any one after—after—"

With a lump in his throat, Fairfax promised to do everything in his power for the girl.

"I've got to go now, Pat," he added regretfully. "I told Major Barry I would meet him at eleven o'clock in town. He's trying to find Miss Betty, too, but I'll be down again the first thing in the morning."

The boy's fingers tightened for a moment around the sinewy hand; then he released it.

"Good-by!" he whispered huskily. "Ye're

on the level—I kin trust ye. I've tried ter be straight, too," he added wistfully.

"You've tried, and you've succeeded, Pat!" Cary stooped over him, his voice deep with feeling. "That's what Mr. Crosby used to say—'That boy's as straight as a string; I'd trust him anywhere!'"

"Did he say that?" came in a hoarse, eager whisper.

"Often."

"He ain't never said it ter me—"

"He will soon, Pat. I know he's waiting now to tell you."

A slow smile flitted over the boy's face.

"It's kind o' comfortin', ain't it," he faltered, "ter think there's some one ye know out there?" He raised his eyes to the window, open at the top to admit as much as possible of the night air. The new moon shone through the blackness, and Pat fixed his eyes on it. "Do ye really think he is?"

"I'm sure of it," answered Cary confidently. "Now shall I call Molly?"

"All right, an' thank ye fer comin'!"

Cary knocked at the door between the two rooms, told Molly Delaney that he had to leave, and with a last clasp of Pat's limp hand let himself out into the hall. He glanced at his watch as he passed the gas-jet, and, startled at the lateness of the hour, hurried down the stairs and through the group of loungers still loitering in the front yard. Jumping into a hack that stood at the curb, he directed the driver to make all possible speed to the station.

"Wonder if Pat's dead?" remarked one of the group in a hushed voice. "That cove's just lef' him. Mike said his name is Cary, an' he took him up ter see Pat."

"He looked kind o' cut up," answered another of the crowd. "I guess he's pretty close ter gone, poor old Pat!"

Cary, in the mean time, was hurrying to the train, which was just pulling out as they reached the station. He darted across the platform and swung upon the last car. He was still panting a little when he walked down the aisle and came face to face with George Crosby, who had entered the car from the other end.

"Oh—ah—Cary—how-do?" he hesitated and held out his hand. "Was it you I saw making that flying leap for the train?"

Crosby was evidently trying to speak with his old-time lightness.

"Close shave!" replied Cary laconically. "Come and speak to Mrs. Crosby," continued the other, and Fairfax followed him somewhat reluctantly to where Maude Crosby sat.

"I thought it was you," she exclaimed as she put out her hand; "but I've never seen you in such mad haste before, and I couldn't quite reconcile it—"

"With my usual Southern laziness?" supplemented Cary, with a little laugh.

As usual when he was with Mrs. Crosby, he was possessed by an intense desire to irritate her by voicing her insinuations, and then watching her discomfiture; but in his present frame of mind the mood did not last long.

"I've just come from Pat Delaney," he said quietly to Mr. Crosby. "He's been dreadfully smashed up in a steeplechase, and I'm afraid he's done for, poor little chap!"

He looked past Mrs. Crosby to the dim outlines of the plain, stretching unbroken and dark to meet the star-flecked sky.

"Too bad!" ejaculated Crosby. "He was a nice boy."

"Who's that — Randolph's jockey?" asked Mrs. Crosby of her husband.

He nodded and sank down beside her.

"How's Miss Crosby?" asked Fairfax in as careless a voice as he could command.

"Quite well, thank you," answered Mrs. Crosby quickly. She looked straight into the keen, dark eyes, and added with the least possible quiver of her eyelashes: "It has been a great pleasure to have her with us this summer."

"I'm sure of it," agreed Fairfax. "Will she be with you this winter?"

He experienced a curious sensation, almost of admiration, as he watched the skill with which she met his thrusts. Crosby, on the contrary, had sunk farther into his seat, and the unnatural pallor of his skin had become more accentuated.

"Yes, indeed!" replied Mrs. Crosby. "We're devoted to the child, and can't possibly get along without her!"

"Please remember me to her," said Cary gravely.

With a word of farewell he walked through the car into the one ahead, in search of a vacant seat. He settled himself in it with the thought:

"The major's right—George Crosby looks twenty years older than he did in June.

Too bad! Well, it happens that way sometimes. Mrs. Crosby, too, doesn't look quite as youthful as she did. I wonder if they're really so worried over Betty's disappearance! I wouldn't have given them credit for so much heart. They weren't going to let me in on the secret. They evidently thought I didn't know!"

The muscles of the firm chin tightened, and unconsciously he straightened his shoulders.

"Well, they're right—I don't know much; but I'm going to know more before long! I'll find Betty Crosby, if I have to search every inch of the way between here and San Francisco; and when I do, there won't be any more shilly-shallying! There isn't any reason for it, now that the money's gone. I'm almost glad of it!" A half smile curved the proud lips. "And if what the major says is true, then—"

It still lacked a few minutes to eleven when Cary entered the door of the Sussex Club, but, knowing the major's unusual punctuality, he went at once to the room where they had arranged to meet.

X

WHEN Fairfax Cary entered the lounge of the Sussex Club he found young Tony Page, who had just returned from France after three months' service as a stretcher-bearer in connection with the American Ambulance, holding forth to a good-sized audience.

"But the peach experience of them all," Fairfax heard him remark as he passed on his way to the corner where he was to meet Major Barry, "was the time I got wounded." He glanced at his arm, which he carried in a sling. "It was before Verdun, and every one had been working his heart out day and night trying to get the wounded back. It was some job, for there were so many that every hospital was overflowing, and we stretcher-bearers thought we were lucky if we got three hours' sleep out of the twenty-four. Every once in a while one of us would be knocked out, and then there would be the dickens, and all to find a man to take his place. Well, that night it seemed as if all Hades was let loose. Generally they talk about a curtain of fire behind the force attacked, but this time it seemed as if we were in the center of it. The shrapnel had been falling round us like hail, and finally a

splinter struck Tom Strawbridge—you know Tom—Philadelphia man—polo-player?"

He paused and looked interrogatively at Lindlay Strong, who nodded.

"We had a man on the stretcher," Tony went on, "and of course we had to take him in; but when we reached the hospital we made up our minds we'd get Tom or die in the attempt. We knew it would be frightfully difficult, if not impossible, but we weren't going to let that stop us if we could get the extra man. Apparently there wasn't one to be found for love or money. Small wonder, too, for it looked like almost certain death to go back into that inferno. Then some one tapped me on the arm. I turned and saw a boy—little chap he was; young, too, from his voice. It was dark; I couldn't really get a good look at him, but he asked me if he might go with us. Of course I snapped him up, and we jumped on the ambulance and drove like mad to the place where we'd left Tom. That sure was some ride! The road was all torn to bits by heavy traffic and by the shells, and every once in a while we would jounce into a pit that seemed as if we would never get out of it. All the time those great, screeching Jack Johnsons were crashing around us, exploding with a fury that seemed to tear the very insides out of the earth. It was awful!"

Tony Page stopped and shuddered, and then, as if to emphasize the reality of his present surroundings, shook the ice against the side of the glass he held in his hand.

"Did you get Tom?" asked Strong anxiously.

"Yes, finally. He was about all in, but we put him on the stretcher and started back to the ambulance. Those beastly shells never let up for a minute, and at last one exploded about fifty yards from us, and a great piece of it caught me in the arm. I felt a gush of blood, and knew that a big vein had been cut. Fortunately we were close to the ambulance, so we shoved Tom in, and then the little chap we'd picked up started to put a tourniquet on my arm. His hands looked awfully small for a boy's, and he had the most wonderful touch! I tried to see his face, but his cap was pulled down over his eyes, and I was sort of dazed from the shock, so I didn't really care much; but when we got back to the hospital, and I was taken into the ward, I took a good look at him. Fellows, who do you suppose it was?"

There was a tense silence, while Tony Page's quick eyes ran over the eager faces about him. Major Barry had come in, and he and Fairfax stood a little to one side, listening to the young man's story.

"Who?" asked some one.

"Elizabeth Crosby!"

Fairfax Cary caught the back of the arm-chair behind which he stood, as if to steady himself. Major Barry stepped impulsively toward Tony Page.

"Randolph Crosby's daughter?" he ejaculated.

"The same," acquiesced Tony cheerfully. "She's been working in the hospital. Mrs. Maitland Andrews sent her over and paid her expenses; and when Betty heard we were short a man, she took the clothes of one of the wounded soldiers and went out with us. Pretty sandy, wasn't it?"

"Are you sure?"

Horried incredulity shone on Major Barry's face, from which the ruddy color had fled.

"Am I sure? Am I sure I'm alive?" Tony looked significantly at his arm. "Why, of course I'm sure! That girl saved my life," he asserted gratefully. "I've always known Betty; used to play tennis with her a lot at the Country Club and different places. I always knew she had grit; but believe me, that night was enough to make the nerve of the strongest man crack, much less a woman's. She didn't seem to care, though; she walked through that Hades as quietly as if she'd been strolling along Fifth Avenue. I tell you, there was some commotion in that hospital when what she'd done got out!"

Fairfax Cary was hanging on every word, his face livid, his eyes like coals of fire. Tony took up a cigarette and held it against the match that some one lit for him.

"Paul Townsend's at the head of the hospital. You remember him, don't you? Big, strapping fellow, looks like Adonis, fair hair, very bright blue eyes. He's a fiend for work, simply eats it up, has that hospital humming day and night, and no matter what time you bring in a poor wretch he's always on the job. Well, he's in love with Betty—absolutely dotty about her. I think it began long before he went to France. At all events, when he found out what she'd done, he went right up in the air—said he was responsible for the nurses under him, and

such a thing must never happen again. Betty stood there with a quiet little smile on her face and asked him what it mattered. Gee, that girl has sand! You ought to have seen old Paul's face! He was fairly sputtering with rage and excitement!" Tony chuckled delightedly. "But he made her promise not to do it again. He told her he'd send her home if she did, and that settled it."

Fairfax Cary walked to an armchair in the corner and dropped into it. He covered his eyes with his hand, and Major Barry heard him gasp under his breath.

The major laid his hand on Cary's shoulder.

"It's all right, my boy," he said quietly. "She's safe enough!"

Cary's hand dropped, and he raised tortured eyes to the major.

"But think of her going through that!"

The major's eyebrows were twitching nervously. He nodded.

"Frightful! It never should have happened. I don't know what Mrs. Andrews was thinking about. The front's no place for a girl like Betty. Never stops to think of herself. She's just as apt as not to do it again!" he concluded fearfully, forgetting his consoling counsel of a moment before.

Fairfax agreed disconsolately, and they stared anxiously into each other's face.

"Tell you what, old man!" The major emphasized his words by bringing down his clenched fist into his open palm. "One or the other of us—or both of us, if necessary—must go over and bring that child back!"

Cary nodded gloomily, but his eyes brightened at the suggestion.

"Now which shall it be?" the major went on thoughtfully. "I'd give half my life to go, but"—a quizzical, rather wistful light gleamed in his kind eyes—"I think, Fairfax, perhaps you'd have more influence."

It was the first time the major had called him by his Christian name, and it seemed to Cary as if in some way it brought him nearer to Elizabeth, and gave him a part ownership in her. He impulsively put out his hand and grasped the major's.

"Thank you, major!" he exclaimed a little huskily.

The light in Major Barry's eyes increased until it illumined his whole face.

"And, Fairfax," he went on whimsically, "if Betty wants to stop in Paris and get

her trousseau, tell her it will be my wedding-present." He hesitated before he added softly: "They tell me the Bermudas make an ideal wedding-trip at this time of the year!"

The color mounted into Cary's face.

"I'm afraid it isn't going to be as easy as all that," he answered with a rueful shake of his head.

"You can't tell, my boy; you can't tell!" Then the major asked abruptly: "How about this fellow Townsend?"

The flush died out of Cary's face, and was replaced by an anxious frown.

"He was at the head of the Rockefeller Institute for a while. He's always been a great admirer of Betty."

"Well, the sooner you get off the better." Major Barry reached for the evening paper, which lay on a table near them, and, adjusting his eye-glasses carefully, turned to the shipping news. "The Touraine sails tomorrow morning at six thirty. Can you make it?"

"I can!" declared Fairfax so emphatically that the major chuckled.

"I'll give you some letters. It would be useless going without the proper credentials. By the way, did you see Pat?"

"Yes; I've just come back from Sheepshead Bay. The poor little chap met with a bad accident this afternoon, and I'm afraid he's done for," Fairfax said sadly.

"Too bad! I'm sorry to hear that!" The major's face expressed real concern. "What happened?"

"He got smashed up in a steeplechase. He was nearly gone when I left."

"Too bad! He was a nice little lad. Good sort—absolutely straight. No chance for him?"

He looked interrogatively at Fairfax, who shook his head.

"I'm afraid not."

"Shame! Randolph never would let him ride in those steeplechases—said he was too light, and also too good a boy." The major paused for a moment before asking: "Did he say anything about the race?"

"Nothing definite; but he seemed to suspect that something was wrong with Steadfast, and he intimated that Molly—his sister, you know—had information that would throw light on it."

The major raised his eyebrows and pursed his lips under the gray mustache.

"So?" he asked thoughtfully.

Fairfax went on.

"Norman Crosby seems to be running her pretty hard. Pat's been a good deal worried over it."

"I don't wonder!" commented the major grimly.

"He also told me that Mr. Crosby was interested in some diamond-mines in South Africa with a man by the name of Tutney—do you know him?"

"Tutney? Oh, yes, I know Tutney. Randolph was in a lot of schemes with him. He's a keener, all right, but I guess he's honest without any question; and he thought a lot of Randolph—that I'm sure of. Did Pat say where he was to be found?"

Fairfax shook his head.

"South Africa, somewhere—that was all the information he could give me."

"Rather a large order, eh? Well, all right, old man; I'll hunt up the address and cable it to you. Perhaps that would be as good a wedding-trip as the other," he added chaffingly.

Fairfax smiled uncertainly.

"I hope you're a good prophet," he replied, rising and pushing back his chair. "Will you write those letters here or at my diggings?"

"I'll come with you, I guess."

The two men walked out of the room, stopping on the way to get the number of Betty's hospital from Tony.

XI

THE sun was just rising behind the tall buildings in Brooklyn the next morning when Fairfax jumped from a taxi at the wharf of the French line. Picking his way through the bustling throng of porters, he boarded the vessel, went at once to his stateroom, undressed, and went to bed. They were well past Fire Island when he awoke, to hear the rhythmic throb of the engines as the boat plowed her way through the deep waters.

With a feeling that for the present he had done as much as lay in his power, he turned over and went to sleep again. He dreamed that the boat had been sunk by a torpedo, and that Betty, dressed in a torn, blood-stained khaki uniform, was standing on a miraculously floating stretcher, holding out her hands in an effort to save him as he struggled in the water.

In a base hospital somewhere in France, Betty, oblivious to the commotion her disappearance had caused, toiled night and day, stilling the pain of her heart by the ministrations of her hands. It was trying, nerve-racking work, which made demands on heart and sympathies as well as on muscles, and which sent her to bed so nervously and physically exhausted that she perforce must sleep. But at times, when she was on night duty, and the occupants of her ward were quiet, a feeling of desolation crept over her that made her gaze almost enviously at some gaunt form in a near-by bed on whose face dwelt that expression of aloofness which showed that he was nearing the shadow-land.

It was after one of those night-watches that Dr. Townsend stopped her in the corridor as she was on her way to her room.

As Cary had said, she had known the doctor well in New York, and the fact that he was in charge of the hospital had been one of the reasons for her acceptance of Mrs. Andrews's suggestion. It had also influenced Mrs. Andrews in making the offer to Betty; for, knowing the man and his admiration for Betty, she realized that the girl would be well looked after. Indeed, she hoped that, in time, in the close association of the work, the feeling which she knew existed at least on Townsend's side might develop into a stronger attachment which would solve the girl's difficulties.

That she had been right in her predictions was apparent from the look of concern on the doctor's face as he laid a detaining hand on Betty's arm.

"Are we working you too hard, Miss Crosby?" he asked solicitously.

"No, indeed"; she answered with an attempt at lightness. "Work is what I came over for!"

"I know, but we don't want to overdo it. You look mighty thin to me!" His eye ran over the almost ethereal lightness of the girl's figure.

"I wasn't exactly portly when I arrived!" laughed Betty.

"No, I know," he said sympathetically. His eyes came back to hers with a look of more than concern. "But I can't run any risk of your breaking down."

Betty's eyes dropped.

"No fear of that," she answered resolutely. "I wouldn't allow myself to give out,

after seeing the wonderful way in which you work."

"It's been play since you came!" answered Townsend softly. "You've filled the whole place with sunshine, and it seems now as if I couldn't get tired. You've been an inspiration as well as a help!"

A deep flush spread over Betty's face.

"It's awfully good of you to be so encouraging," she answered gratefully; "for, of course, I realize that I must have failed horribly in my work."

"Failed nothing!" retorted Townsend emphatically. "I can tell you that your deft ways and the sight of your sweet face have helped many a man to endure without a word tortures that have wrung his soul! And I—well, I simply can't get along without you!"

The words sounded extravagant, and Betty raised her eyes with a little laugh to his; but the expression on his face caused the laugh to die on her lips.

"Tell me I won't have to do without you!" he entreated, coming a step nearer to her.

But Betty shrank from him and put out her hand, palm outward.

"Oh, please—please!" she pleaded.

"But, my darling"—the strong hand closed over hers—"I love you! Don't you think in time you could—"

Elizabeth quickly drew away her hand.

"Oh, not now, not now!" she breathed tremulously. "I couldn't possibly, yet!"

She sped up the stairs to her room and, flinging herself face down on her bed, sobbed convulsively.

With the assistance of Major Barry's letters, which seemed to have the effect of magic in making difficult paths straight, Fairfax, one afternoon about ten days later, found himself wending a tortuous way from Paris in the direction of a great smoke-cloud which hung pendent from the sky. In and out of the many vehicles that blocked the road, his chauffeur picked a way past huge sign-posts, devastated fields marked with mounds bearing little wooden crosses and soldiers' caps, streams swarming with bathing soldiers, their horses lining the banks and drinking their fill.

The air was choking with dust, white and fine, that sifted through and into everything, covering all, yet never seeming to

rest. Nearer and nearer to the great smoke-cloud they drew, an incessant booming as of thunder roaring in their ears. Under the cloud Fairfax could see the flash of mighty guns, whose concussion shook the earth with terrific power.

A sharp scream rang in their ears, and a great black object hurled itself past them and buried itself violently in a deep, self-made grave. Cary involuntarily ducked and grasped the side of the car, while the chauffeur grinned sardonically at him over his shoulder.

They entered the remains of a village. Torn houses, piles of brick and mortar, debris of every kind lay scattered about. Desolation and ruin even more marked than that of the forlorn countryside through which they had passed emphasized the destruction the war had brought.

The chauffeur stopped the car before a long, low building over which floated the Red Cross flag. Fairfax jumped out and, entering the doorway, arrested a young man who was dashing through the hall. His hands were full of dressings, and he hardly paused long enough to hear Cary out.

"Miss Crosby?" he repeated breathlessly. "Can't say, I'm sure, whether you can see her or not. We're rushed to death this morning. Three hundred wounded came in last night, and we've none of us had any sleep. I'll see if she can be spared for a few minutes."

He vanished up the steep stairs, leaving Fairfax waiting impatiently in the bare hall, breathing that indescribable atmosphere of suffering induced by the pungent smell of anesthetics and disinfectants. Through half-closed doors he saw endless rows of closely packed beds, and in each a figure swathed in bandages, the same look of patient suffering carved on each face. Outside, the continuous bursting of shells—dangerously near, Fairfax thought—caused his nerves to twitch spasmodically.

He heard a light step behind him, and, turning, saw a slender figure in the uniform of a Red Cross nurse coming toward him. At first he did not recognize the pale face that looked out from under the white head-dress with its little red emblem. It was only when Betty smiled and stretched out her hand that he saw that it was she.

"Betty!" he exclaimed, clasping her hand in both of his.

"How did you find me?" she asked quietly.

"I learned from Tony Page, at the Sussex Club. He was telling how you saved his life. I was waiting for the major and happened to overhear him—it was by the merest chance. Betty, why did you do it?"

"What?" asked Betty innocently, the shadow of a smile flitting over her face.

Cary dropped her hand abruptly.

"Why did you go off like that and not let any of us know?"

"I didn't think any one would care particularly."

Her tone was hard and cold.

"Care?" repeated Fairfax in a puzzled way. "Care? Why, what do you mean?"

"Come in here." Betty turned to a little room, half office, half reception-room, which happened to be empty. "Just as I say, I didn't think any one would care."

Fairfax looked at her gravely. Great shadows encircled her eyes, and her shoulders drooped wearily.

"Not your uncle or aunt, or Major Barry"—he paused—"or I?"

Betty's chin quivered.

"Dear Uncle Tod!" she murmured regretfully. "Did he worry?"

Fairfax took a restless turn up and down the room.

"Really, Betty," he said severely, "I don't think you've been overkind!"

Betty looked out of the window at the ruins on every side. Then she turned back to Fairfax.

"If I'd told Uncle Tod, he would have told Uncle George, who would have insisted on my coming back to New York, and that I'm not going to do!" Again she looked out of the window, a rebellious light in her eyes. "I suppose he knows all about it now?" she asked impatiently.

"I don't know what the major has done since I left," answered Cary stiffly. "I started a few hours after I heard—"

"Why did you come?" asked Betty calmly; but behind the quiet words and tone lay an inexorable resolve.

The face before her was like stone.

"To take you home!"

"Home? Home?" answered Betty. "I have no home!"

The stern face softened, and Cary came toward her impetuously.

"Let me make one for you, Betty!"

Instinctively Betty recoiled from him, and a dark flush spread over her face.

"You!" she exclaimed in a horrified voice. "You!"

For a moment Fairfax studied the condemning face. That she would refuse him, in spite of the major's predictions, he had fully expected; but that she should show such repugnance startled him. Outside the thunder rolled ceaselessly, punctuated now and again by the screech of a shell as it tore its way through the air.

Betty broke the awkward silence by remarking coldly:

"It was very good of you to come so far, and I assure you I'm very grateful for your interest, but it's quite useless. I'm happy here, and Dr. Townsend seems to find me useful, which is something—"

"Betty," broke in Fairfax impulsively, "are you going to marry Townsend?"

An expression of anger crossed the girl's face.

"What right have you to ask me that?" She looked at him in cold defiance.

"The right my love for you gives me," retorted Fairfax steadily.

"Your love!" repeated Betty scornfully.

"Yes," reiterated Fairfax gravely, "my love—the love I've had for you ever since we first met, when I had as little hope of ever being able to tell you of it as if you were on a different planet. When conditions changed I thought that perhaps, after all, I did have something to offer you that you might be willing to accept; and I know that your innate generosity will prompt you to tell me whether you have already pledged yourself to another man."

The straightforward sincerity of his words caught Betty's attention. She looked long and fixedly into his eyes.

"How is it with you and Beatrix Hunnewell?" she asked at last.

"Miss Hunnewell?" repeated Fairfax wonderingly. "Why, we're very good friends—that's all."

Betty took a step nearer to him, her eyes still searching his face.

"I heard you were engaged," she said in a low voice.

"Engaged!" A look of incredulity leaped into the dark eyes. "Who told you that?"

"My aunt," answered Betty calmly, her eyes never leaving his face.

"Well, it's a lie!" The strong jaw

snapped. "There has never been anything of that kind between us. I admire Miss Hunnewell beyond words, but—"

He shrugged his shoulders impatiently. Betty drew another step nearer.

"But"—there was a note almost of pleading in her voice—"you've been seeing a great deal of her this summer?"

"Yes," assented Fairfax gravely, "I have. When you're separated from the one who is more to you than life itself, it sometimes makes existence easier if once in a while you hear something about that person, and Miss Hunnewell was in touch with you."

"Oh!" said Betty faintly.

Her face had turned very white, and her lips trembled. Fairfax was watching her intently, a hurt look in his sensitive eyes.

"What a cad you think me!" he exclaimed bitterly, walking to the window, where he stood gazing out, his hands thrust deep in his pockets.

Betty impulsively took a step after him. Her breast, under the white kerchief, was rising and falling tumultuously.

"Fairfax!" she whispered timidly.

But the man's shoulders squared themselves resolutely, and the dark head proudly refused to turn. Betty walked quietly across the room and slipped her hand through his arm.

"Fairfax, forgive me!" she pleaded softly.

He turned quickly and caught her in his arms.

"Darling!" he whispered passionately, pressing her to him. "Don't you care for me just a little? I love you, dear; I love you—"

But Betty struggled to free herself.

"Let me go! Let me go!" she breathed.

"I mustn't—oh, please let me go!"

Fairfax released her reluctantly.

"But some day, Betty?"

Betty stepped back.

"Perhaps some day—perhaps when my father's name is cleared," she whispered brokenly. "I shall never marry any one while any stain rests on it."

"Why, Betty!" exclaimed Fairfax impatiently. "No one believes—"

"They *do*!" she interrupted vehemently.

"A great many people believe that he was involved in something dishonorable before he died! When it's proved to be false, then I may think of marrying. Until then—"

She shook her head resolutely. A nurse appeared in the doorway.

"Miss Crosby," she said with a glance at Fairfax, "Dr. Townsend wants you."

Betty turned to Fairfax and held out her hand.

"Good-by," she said hurriedly. "Thank you again for coming so far, and give my love to Uncle Tod!"

Fairfax grasped her hand.

"You had better write it to him; I sha'n't see him for some time."

"Why, aren't you going back?"

She paused on her way to the door and looked back at him over her shoulder.

"By way of South Africa. I'm going there to see Barney Tutney. He may be able to give me some points."

"Barney Tutney? Yes!" she mused.

"He would know. You're taking a great deal of trouble," she added softly.

Fairfax laughed.

"Trouble!" he repeated happily. "Nothing is trouble that I do for you. I consider it a privilege to be able to do any service for you or for your father. You remember, I told you that once before."

"I remember. Thank you again!"

Once more Betty held out her hand; then she passed through the door and sped along the hall and up the stairs.

Fairfax got into the motor and hurried back to Paris. His firm mouth was drawn in a straight line, and his keen eyes looked unseeing at the tragic scenes through which they passed.

XII

A FEW days after Cary's visit a number of letters and papers reached Elizabeth. Except for an occasional note from Mrs. Andrews, they brought the first news she had had from home since her arrival in France, and she took them and ran to her room with a little throb of excitement.

Seating herself by the table which stood before the window, she spread them out before her. The letters were from Mrs. Crosby, Beatrix Hunnewell, Major Barry, and Fairfax Cary.

Cary's hastily scrawled line, written on the train, she read first. It was very short, and simply stated that he had started for Cape Town, and would see her on his way home. She slipped it back into its envelope, a little smile parting her lips, and picked up

one addressed in Mrs. Crosby's rather bold hand.

Unconsciously Betty steeled herself. She opened the letter, and at the first words the smiling lips compressed themselves into a straight line. An angry flush spread over her face, and a horrified expression widened her blue eyes. Her face blanched, and she turned the page with a hand that trembled.

"Fairfax Cary!" she gasped. "Never! It's impossible! It's so inconceivable that it's ridiculous!"

The letter had ended with the sentence:

Your uncle and I met him on the train the evening of the murder, and he told us he had just left the Delaneys. His own words are an absolutely conclusive proof. Could any evidence be more convincing?

Elizabeth unfolded a newspaper clipping which her aunt had enclosed, and in great black letters the words jumped at her:

Sister of Well-Known Jockey Found Murdered in Sheephead Bay Hotel—Prominent Lawyer Suspected—Patrick Delaney Dies in Adjoining Room.

Her eyes devoured the column of small type which described how Molly Delaney's body had been discovered early on Saturday morning by the doctor who had come to see Pat. The boy was dead, and Molly was found lying half on the bed, half on the floor of her room, a bullet through her heart. Although the room was in great disorder, apparently nothing had been removed, for money and jewelry lay scattered about, showing that burglary had not been the motive for the crime.

Various clues had been followed, the most conclusive centering around Fairfax Cary, who had been seen by a number of persons hurriedly leaving the hotel. That he had been with the Delaneys was testified by Michael Frost, the hall-boy, who had conducted Cary to Pat Delaney's room shortly after seven o'clock. To make the evidence doubly convincing, a letter from Molly Delaney, written on the afternoon before the murder, and requesting him to call as soon as possible, had been found in Cary's office.

Cary, in the mean time, had disappeared, and no trace of him could be found. It was not thought, however, that he would be able to elude the police for very long, for descriptions of him had been sent

broadcast throughout the country, and his apprehension was only a matter of time.

With a gasp of dismay Betty let the paper flutter to the table before her. She rested her elbows on it, and her head dropped into her hands. In spite of the newspaper report, in spite of her aunt's biting words, not even the shadow of a doubt of Cary's innocence entered her mind. It was impossible for her to believe that the man who had left her so recently, whom her father had respected and trusted, could be guilty of this atrocious crime. A hot burst of rage surged over her.

"How could any one connect a man like that with murder? It's wicked! Brutal!" Her hands clenched, and she raised her head defiantly. "It's a lie!"

But how to prove it?

Her eyes fell on the other letters which had come in the same mail. She opened the major's first and, glancing hurriedly through the first pages filled with tender reproaches, concentrated her attention on the words that followed:

Fairfax Cary has been implicated in a nasty scandal, out of which I'm doing my best to extricate him. The evidence against him, however, is very strong, and I don't know how we're coming out. Whoever murdered Molly Delaney covered his tracks with incredible cunning, and now that Pat is gone, it seems almost impossible to get at the facts.

Whether or not the boy died before the murder was committed, we have been unable to ascertain. We only know that Cary left the hotel at about half past nine. The question is, was the girl alive when he went away? This only Cary can answer. Can you tell me his whereabouts? I've cabled to his address in Paris, but have had no reply. We need him and all the help we can get.

Won't you please come home?

"Dear Uncle Tod!" thought Betty penitently: "He's a trump! I'm afraid I haven't been very good to him."

She picked up Trixie's note. It was short and to the point:

DEAR BETSY:

You must come home at once. We need you to help us to clear Fairfax Cary from this dreadful charge that's been brought against him. We shall expect you to stay with us.

As ever, affectionately,

TRIXIE.

Elizabeth gathered up the papers, dropped

them into a drawer, and went in search of Dr. Townsend. Hurriedly, and it must be confessed rather incoherently, she explained to him that she must return to New York at once.

He gave his consent without comment. It was only when he stood by the motor which was to take her back to Paris that he showed what it was costing him to let her go.

"Good-by," he said gently, as he held her hand closely in his big clasp. "Will you come back to us?"

"I want to, and I'll do my best," answered Betty; "but it all depends—"

"If you don't, I'll come to you," he declared, with a look that sent the blood into Betty's face. "This horror must be over soon."

"I hope so," agreed Betty fervently. "Good-by, and thank you again for being so good to me!"

The motor started, and Betty, turning to wave her hand, saw him as he stood before the low building, the sunlight glinting on the gold of his hair and bringing into high relief the outlines of his muscular frame.

"That is a man!" she thought, and a feeling of self-reproach came over her at the thought that she was deserting the post of duty at the time of greatest need. "I will surely come back!" she hastened to assure herself. "Only now it seems as if I must go home!"

Never before had the trip across the Atlantic seemed of such interminable length, and it was almost in a frenzy of impatience that Betty stood on the deck as the steamer passed through the Narrows into New York Harbor and caught the first glimpse of the jagged outlines of the city emerging from the golden October haze. She had cabled Major Barry when to expect her, and as the vessel slipped smoothly into its berth, she scanned the waiting crowd eagerly for the erect figure and jovial face.

When she at last discovered him, in spite of his expression of glad welcome, she saw at once from the anxious look that lurked in his eyes that the situation had not improved. But it was not until they were seated in the Hunnewell motor, which Trixie had sent for her, that Betty asked the question which she had been restraining with difficulty ever since she landed.

"Has the murderer been found?"

Major Barry shook his head gloomily.

"No, I'm sorry to say!"

"And suspicion still rests on—"

The major nodded, and the lips under the close-trimmed mustache tightened.

"It's outrageous!" he asserted savagely.

"The evidence is purely circumstantial, but they've piled it up, and piled it up, until really—" He shook his head dubiously.

"Have you engaged a lawyer?" asked Betty.

"Oh, yes, of course, right away—Sturgis and Fellows, capital men, both of them, and we're not leaving a stone unturned; but if I could only get in touch with Cary! Every minute that he's away seems to strengthen the case against him."

"How long will it take him to go to Cape Town and come back?" asked Betty.

The conviction was creeping over her that if it had not been for her Fairfax could have cleared himself long ago.

"It may be a couple of months. Everything is so unsettled now that you can't tell how he'll be delayed."

"Is there any chance of his being arrested there?"

The major shrugged his shoulders.

"You can't tell. Sometimes, especially when you don't want them to be, these detectives are deuced clever at finding things out!"

"I wish they'd devote their energies to the situation here!" said Betty.

The motor turned into Fifth Avenue and fell into line with the endless procession of hurrying cars. Betty looked at the familiar scene with the eyes of an alien. The well-known faces framed in the windows of the swiftly passing limousines, smiling and nodding to her in recognition when the traffic paused, gave her a feeling of surprise that she should be remembered after the long interval which had elapsed since she took her part in the drama. It seemed as if she were looking at the spectacle from a great distance, as if it were being presented to her sight through the wrong end of an opera-glass.

The hurrying throngs on the streets passing in and out of the handsome shops, the same intent, strained look on the faces as the swinging doors swallowed or ejected them, forced themselves on her consciousness, and a helpless feeling of futility seized her. So lately removed from the scenes of combat where men with the courage born

of high resolve struggled desperately to preserve the highest ideals of civilization—where they fought and died that liberty, the most precious heritage of man, might be transmitted as of old to the generations yet unborn—the picture before her looked crude and cruel in its selfish luxury and self-indulgence.

"No one seems to care!" she breathed at last with a little catch in her voice.

"It isn't good form to show one's feelings," the major reminded her whimsically, perceiving at once the trend of her thoughts.

"But they're really not so heartless. They're most of them doing their bit; only, of course, they must have their good times, too!" he added indulgently.

"Are Uncle George and Aunt Maude in town?"

"I imagine so. I saw your uncle at the club yesterday."

"Did he know I was coming back from France?" An anxious look crept into the blue eyes.

"I told him."

"I'm not going back to them!" exclaimed Betty, the fire of battle in her eyes.

The major looked at her with eyes full of tender interest.

"What are you going to do, my child?" he asked softly.

They had reached the park, and Betty's eyes wandered to the avenue of elms stretching their arms high above the path to clasp those outstretched to them from the other side.

"I don't know, Uncle Tod. I can always go back to France."

"Is France more alluring than home just now?" he asked anxiously.

"Well, not just now," admitted Betty slowly. "When some one who is sacrificing himself to do something for you gets into difficulties himself, you naturally want to do your best to help him out; but when it's all straightened out, why, then I'm going back."

A frown of disappointment appeared between the major's eyes.

"Well, here we are," he remarked as the motor stopped before the broad steps of the Hunnewells' house. "I think I see Trixie at the window."

They passed up the steps and into the hall, and Trixie caught Betty in her arms.

"Oh, Betsy!" she exclaimed, a little break

in her voice. "How could you give us such a scare?"

Betty put her arm around the girl, surprised and touched by her exhibition of feeling.

"I never thought it would make such a commotion," she said, while a smile which was almost as bright as of old played over her face.

"Imagine!" exclaimed Trixie. "Didn't you know we would care? Have you heard anything new?" she asked, turning to the major.

"Not a thing," he replied. "I'm going down to see Sturgis now."

"But you'll come back?" asked Betty anxiously.

"Yes, about five o'clock. I may have something more to tell you then"; and he ran briskly down the steps.

"Come to your room," said Beatrix, drawing Betty toward the stairs.

They stopped to speak to Mrs. Hunnewell, who came out of her boudoir to greet Elizabeth. Contrary to Betty's expectations, she gave the girl a warm welcome, and seemed to be delighted to have her with them.

"We've been hearing your praises sung so loudly for the past month," she said, with a teasing glance at Beatrix, "that we're overjoyed to have a visit from you."

Elizabeth looked wonderingly at her, but Beatrix drew her up the stairs without giving her time to reply.

"Betsy's tired to death," she explained to her mother over her shoulder. "And Major Barry's coming back to tea. She simply must rest!"

But when they reached Elizabeth's room Trixie's solicitude for her friend's health seemed to vanish. After having helped Elizabeth to divest herself of her hat and coat, she drew her into her own room and closed the door.

"Betsy," she began abruptly, "is Tony Page in love with you?"

"Tony Page! In love with me!" repeated Betty wonderingly. "Mercy, no! What ever put such an idea into your head?"

"Oh, well, I wanted to be sure this time. He talks incessantly about you—how you saved his life and how brave you are."

Elizabeth laughed softly.

"Ridiculous! Even if I did, that doesn't mean he's in love with me! And as to the

bravery—" She paused, and the light died suddenly out of her face. "Trixie, when your life isn't worth two cents to you, it doesn't take more than two cents' worth of courage to risk it. And sometimes it takes all the courage in the world—much more than you possess—to face the prospect the future holds. No, Trixie, it wasn't courage that night; it was just the desire to end it all. You see, I didn't want to live." The thrushlike voice faltered.

"Is it different now, dear?"

Elizabeth considered for a moment before answering.

"Y-e-s," she hesitated. "I don't want to die now; at least not just yet."

"What changed you, Betsy?"

"I have something to do now—something that I *must* do!"

"And that?"

"I'm determined to clear the names of my father and Fairfax Cary. I may be wrong, but the conviction is with me day and night that when Molly Delaney's murderer is found, the stain on my father's memory will be wiped away."

Trixie came very close to Elizabeth and looked earnestly into her eyes.

"Betsy, who do you think did it?"

"I don't know, Trixie; I haven't the faintest idea. But one thing I *do* know—I know it wasn't Fairfax Cary!"

Beatrix nodded.

"I know that, too," she agreed softly.

Elizabeth looked at her intently.

"Trixie," she said quickly, putting a hand through Trixie's arm and drawing her to the lounge, "will you forgive me if I ask you something?"

"Why, of course, Betsy, ask anything you like. I haven't anything to hide—at least not yet!"

The bright color deepened under the cream of Trixie's skin, and unconsciously her eyes strayed to a large photograph that stood on her dressing-table. Betty's eyes followed hers, and she looked into Tony Page's smiling face. For the first time since her father's death her vivid smile played over her face.

"I think, on the whole"—the flutelike cadence of her laugh rang through the room—"I'll wait till then before I ask you!"

"Why, Betsy!" began Beatrix, startled at the change in the girl beside her. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Betty happily. "Only it's heavenly being here with you, Trix!"

"I know it's heavenly having you!"

Trixie leaned over and kissed her warmly.

XIII

MAJOR BARRY noticed the change as soon as he entered the drawing-room at five o'clock and found the girls busily engaged with the tea things.

"What have you been doing to my god-daughter?" he asked, smiling at Beatrix as he shook hands.

The intervening hours had apparently had their effect on him, too, for he had regained some of his old-time cheeriness.

"Why, nothing special," replied Trixie wonderingly.

"Well, she looks like a different girl, almost as if she had anticipated the good news that reached me only a few minutes ago. Cary's on his way home," he added joyfully, turning to Elizabeth.

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty, coming eagerly to him. "When will he arrive?"

"That I don't know, but I had a letter from Bordeaux, saying that he would sail on the following day on the Rochambeau. He said he ran across Tutney at Madeira. Odd, wasn't it? And he intimated that he had had a most satisfactory interview with him."

"That was strange," agreed Elizabeth.

"Is Tutney coming back, too?"

"I hardly think so—at least not just yet. He expects to come over before long, however, for he wants to make investigations himself. I gleaned from Cary's letter that things are not quite to his liking."

"I wonder when the Rochambeau is due?"

Beatrix rang, and when the butler appeared she told him to bring the evening paper. When it arrived Major Barry took it to a lamp on a near-by table.

"She's been sighted off Fire Island!" he exclaimed joyfully. "That means she'll dock early to-morrow morning."

"You'll be there to meet him, won't you, Uncle Tod?" Betty asked anxiously.

"Don't worry your pretty head about that, my dear! I'll be there, if I have to camp out all night on the wharf. I've kept my campaigning outfit, and am prepared for all emergencies," he added whimsically.

He folded the paper carefully and placed it behind the lamp. A head-line had caught his eye which he did not care to have Betty see. Evidently the detectives, too, were aware of Cary's proximity, and his arrival would doubtless be simultaneous with his arrest; but this the major did not think it necessary for Betty to know. As it was, either apprehension or fatigue had driven the happy light from her face.

"Have the lawyers learned anything more?" she asked fearfully.

The major shook his head.

"Not a thing. As far as I can make out, it's all up to Cary. If he can prove that Molly Delaney was alive when he left the hotel, we're all right. If he can't—"

"Well?" The word was hardly more than a breath.

The major spread out his hands significantly.

"Well!" He hesitated a moment, then his eyes fell on her troubled face. "We'll have to establish his innocence in some other way," he concluded with a hopefulness that he was far from feeling.

True to his word, the next morning found Major Barry waiting impatiently, in the crisp air that was blowing in from the sea, for the great black vessel creeping up the teeming river. Near him stood unobtrusively two men, who evidently considered him an object of unusual interest, for they kept him constantly in sight. When he was joined by a short man with quick, alert eyes and a pointed nose, they evinced ever-increasing satisfaction.

"That's Sturgis, the lawyer," one of the men remarked in an undertone to his companion.

"I guess that settles it!" answered the other, a gleam of triumph lighting his keen eyes.

It was he who, when Fairfax Cary came quickly down the gangway, stepped forward and said quietly:

"We want you, Mr. Cary."

Fairfax stopped abruptly, and the hand that he had stretched out in greeting to Major Barry fell to his side. He looked at the face at his shoulder inquiringly. The second man appeared on the other side.

"Better come quietly, Mr. Cary," he remarked, turning back his coat and revealing the shield pinned on his waistcoat. "We'll explain later."

Fairfax looked in a perplexed way at Major Barry.

"It's a mistake, Fairfax, my boy, of course; but we'll just jump into the taxi with these two gentlemen and talk it over on the way. This is Mr. Sturgis," he added, indicating the man beside him.

Fairfax bowed in a dazed way and accompanied the men as they led the way to the street.

"What's it all about, major?" he asked as they passed through the crowd.

"Something to do with Molly Delaney's murder," answered the major, eying him keenly.

"Molly Delaney! Murdered!" gasped Fairfax. "Why—who—"

"Here we are!" exclaimed the major as they reached the curb. "Will you meet us there, Sturgis?" he asked.

A satisfied expression rested on his face, and his voice was almost jovial.

The short man assented, and the four took their places in the taxi.

When the major walked into the Hunnewells' drawing-room, two hours later, he was rubbing his hands delightedly.

"Just as we thought, Betty dear—that boy is no more implicated in the murder than I am," he announced joyfully to Elizabeth, who had left her seat on the sofa and came to meet him. "Whether he can prove it is another story. He's convinced that Molly was alive when he left. He says he could distinctly hear her talking."

"To whom?" asked Betty quickly.

"Ah, that he didn't say!"

"Does he know?"

"I imagine so, but he didn't tell us."

"Why didn't he? It may have been—probably was—the man who killed her."

The major shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Yes, I know; but you know what quixotic ideas of honor Cary has, and he didn't actually see the man, couldn't even recognize his voice."

Betty wrung her hands desperately.

"When can I see him?" she asked suddenly.

The major started.

"See him?" he ejaculated.

"Yes."

"Oh, you could hardly do that!"

"Why not?"

Betty's fair head went up defiantly.

"Why, because—my dear child, he's been arrested! He's in the Tombs!"

"What difference does that make?"

Betty's face was very white, but her eyes gazed unflinchingly into the major's.

"Why, you could hardly go there, you know!" The major paused; then he added: "Of course, if you were his sister or his wife, that would be different."

"How different?" argued Betty rebelliously. "He got into this trouble doing something for me, and I insist on seeing him. If you won't take me, I shall have to go alone!"

The major groaned inwardly. The determined expression on Betty's face indicated that she was in deadly earnest.

"Well, some time," he temporized.

"This afternoon!" declared Betty emphatically. "I'm going this afternoon!"

"Sturgis is trying to arrange about bail. Couldn't you wait until Cary's out?" pleaded the major.

"I'm going this afternoon," repeated Elizabeth quietly. "Now will you take me?"

The major acquiesced reluctantly.

"Have you seen your aunt and uncle?" he asked on his way to the door.

Betty shook her head.

"My dear child," expostulated the major, "I really don't think you're treating them quite right. After all, you know, he's your father's brother, and they were very good to you last summer."

"I know," agreed Betty remorsefully. "I must go. I'll go this afternoon, late. Now go down and tell Fairfax I'm coming." She took hold of the lapels of his coat and, raising herself on her toes, kissed his cheek. "You're such a dear!" she whispered tremulously. "I don't know what I should do without you!"

Major Barry stroked her hair gently.

"There, there," he said tenderly. "I'm doing nothing at all, nothing at all; but don't worry—I'm sure we shall be able to straighten things out before long."

But his optimism was all on the surface; for as he sped down-town to hear the result of Sturgis's efforts to get Cary out on bail, he gave himself over unreservedly to the depression that had gradually been closing in on him.

"No matter how hard one may try to put a cheerful face on it," he thought gloomily,

"the fact remains that the situation is extremely grave."

And in this Sturgis agreed when he met him in front of the Tombs and they stopped for a few minutes' talk before going in. Bail had been refused, and the outlook was far from reassuring.

XIV

BUT Major Barry had thrown off his air of depression by the time he and Sturgis reached Cary's cell. He patted Fairfax on the shoulder as he rose to meet them.

"Well," he began cheerily, "luck's against us for the time being, my boy! The powers that be won't listen to any talk of bail."

A quiver passed over the finely chiseled features. Major Barry went on:

"So there's nothing to do but to establish your innocence as quickly as possible. Now, how are we going to do it?"

He and Sturgis sat down on the chairs, and Fairfax dropped down on the cot. Fairfax shrugged his shoulders hopelessly.

"I only know that the girl was alive when I left the hotel. As to conjecturing who killed her, you can do that as well as I."

He pressed his hand wearily against the back of his head.

"Who was with her when you left, Mr. Cary?" asked the lawyer.

"That I can't tell you."

"It may give us the clue that will enable us to exonerate you."

Cary considered for a moment in silence, while the two men searched his face anxiously.

"I prefer not to express an opinion as to who it was," he replied at last. "I didn't see the man or recognize his voice."

"Well," said Sturgis, rising, "I know Major Barry has other matters to discuss with you, so I'll leave you."

He called to a guard who was passing and disappeared into the corridor.

"Now," began the major, drawing his chair closer to Cary, "tell me about Tutney. It was extraordinary your finding him as you did!"

Fairfax came out of the abstraction that had fallen on him and fixed his dark, penetrating eyes on the major's face.

"Yes," he assented, "it was great luck. He had just arrived from Cape Town, and was, I think, as glad to see me as I was to

run across him. He asked me at once about Randolph Crosby's affairs. It seems that he and Mr. Crosby and a number of other men had formed a syndicate to develop this diamond-mine, with an agreement that no one should sell his interest without first giving the other directors a chance to buy it. Shortly after Mr. Crosby's death a large block of the stock was offered at public sale. Tutney, when he heard of it, was naturally a good deal upset, and immediately suspected that the stock was Mr. Crosby's. He evidently felt pretty badly about it, for he realizes what the future of the property will be, and he knew what a mistake it was to sell before its true value was reached. He's a great admirer of Miss Crosby, and I know he felt that if his supposition were correct, and the stock was her father's, that her executor didn't have her best interests at heart."

The major nodded, and remarked ironically:

"He's a man of much perception!"

"He asked me who the trustees were," continued Fairfax; "and when I told him that George Crosby was sole executor, he didn't seem overpleased. He said he thought it was a mistake to entrust a big estate like that to any one man, even though you had unlimited confidence in him. The chances for mistakes in judgment alone were too great."

"Then he thought the property was a large one?" queried the major quickly.

"Yes; he said he knew it was. He scoffed at the idea that Mr. Crosby had made unwise investments. He said any one who knew Randolph Crosby at all knew him for a sagacious business man, keen, and of remarkable acuteness, while at the same time he had an unusual sense of obligation and honor."

"Did you tell him that the entire fortune was gone, and that Crosby's daughter was working to support herself?"

Fairfax nodded.

"I asked him if it were possible, and he said not unless the trustee had mishandled the estate."

"Just as I thought!" The major leaned forward and tapped Fairfax lightly on the knee. "Mark my words, boy, George Crosby and that precious son of his have made away with that child's money! Now, it's going to be my business to find out

where and how it has gone." He straightened up. "Betty wants to see you," he concluded abruptly.

Fairfax started. He glanced around the bare cell, at the stone walls, the iron door, and barred window through which a shaft of light slanted and lay in stripes across the cold floor.

"Here?" he breathed, a look of distress coming into his haggard eyes.

"Insists on it, my boy," continued the major briskly. "And, Fairfax, when you've known Betty as long as I have, you'll realize that when she makes up her mind—" He spread out his hands and shook his head helplessly, an indulgent smile twitching at the corners of his mouth. "You know what an old fool I am about her—simply can't refuse her anything. I don't have to tell you that I'm not particularly anxious to have her come here. No reflection on you, of course, but—well, it isn't just the thing under the circumstances—you understand?"

He looked a little pleadingly into the younger man's face.

"Of course," Fairfax assented gravely.

"I understand perfectly."

"Well, she's coming, just the same. Says she has something of the utmost importance to tell you."

"When will she come?" Cary asked huskily.

"This afternoon, about three."

Cary took a turn up and down the cell and stopped before the major.

"Has what she is going to tell me got anything to do with Dr. Townsend?"

His voice sounded harsh and strained.

"Don't know, I'm sure."

The major looked sympathetically at him. He did not add that Betty had said that she intended shortly to return to France.

"If that's what she's coming to tell him, he'll know it soon enough," he thought pityingly. "I know what the poor boy's going through, and suspense, hard as it is to bear, is better than despair."

He patted Fairfax on the shoulder and bade him good-by, promising to return after luncheon.

If Elizabeth experienced any feelings of trepidation as she left the warm sunshine and entered the ominous chill of the massive gray building, Major Barry, who was watching her closely, failed to detect it.

Even when the door was unlocked and they entered the long passage where tier upon tier of cells looked down upon them, each with its tragic-faced inmate tense with suppressed revolt or huddled in passive lethargy, she retained her expression of calm.

The guard stopped before a door and inserted the key. It opened, and Betty stepped into the cell. The door clanged back into place and the lock clicked.

Fairfax rose and turned quickly toward her. His face was very white, but there still clung to him his air of proud reserve, and the dark eyes looked out fearless and unashamed from under the straight brows.

Betty came quickly to him and held out her hand. He hesitated for a moment, and then, taking it, held it closely in his.

"It was very good of you to come," he said in a hushed voice.

Betty laughed a little tremulously.

"Now we're quits!" she exclaimed. "That's what I said to you in the hospital!"

A semblance of a smile parted the sensitive lips. He indicated the chair beside which they stood. After Betty had seated herself, he sank once more on the cot and fixed his eyes on the shifting bars of light.

Betty pressed her hands tightly together in her lap, and a lump rose in her throat. Her eyes rested pitifully on the bowed, dark head. She swallowed hard; then, rising suddenly, she ran to the cot, seated herself beside him, and put her arm around his neck.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" she whispered brokenly, laying her cheek against his. "I didn't tell you the truth that time in France. I do care, Fairfax. I love you, dear!"

A tremor passed over Fairfax. He clenched his hands until the knuckles showed white.

"Don't!" he breathed hoarsely. "Don't, for God's sake!"

"Don't what?" Betty drew back, and her great eyes, pansy-black in the uncertain light, rested on the white, averted face.

"You don't realize what you're doing!"

Betty looked relieved.

"Oh, yes, I do," she asserted. "I realize perfectly what I'm doing. I'm telling the man I honor above everything on earth that I love him. It's high time that he knew, for I've suddenly discovered that I've loved him for a very long time—much longer than I had any idea of!"

Cary got up suddenly and, walking with quick, nervous steps to the door of his cell, placed his hands on the grating. He shook it slightly; then he turned back to Betty, who had taken a step after him.

"It's real!" he whispered huskily. "Sometimes I think it must be a dream, and I have actually to go and feel the locked door before I can believe it. But now," he went on, the look of pain deepening in his eyes, "those bars have begun to press in on me closer and closer, until I can feel them on my forehead. I know in time they'll reach my soul, and then I shall never be able to wipe away the taint!"

He strode past her and, sinking once more on the cot, buried his face in his hands.

"Fairfax!" Betty ran to him, sat down beside him, and put her arm around his shoulder. "You mustn't have such dreadful thoughts! Nothing can taint your soul but sin, and, darling, your friends know how far that is from you!"

Again a tremor passed over him.

"You don't know, no one knows until he's been locked in, what it means to be caged in a place like this, with the knowledge that no power on your part can get you out! It's hideous, horrible!" he whispered hoarsely. "The iron eats into your soul!"

Betty laid her hand on his head and drew it gently to her until it rested on her shoulder. Stooping over, she pressed her lips to his forehead.

"Darling," she whispered, "I love you!"

A great sob shook Fairfax. He raised himself and drew resolutely away.

"I should deserve to be kicked if I took what your pity and gratitude are prompting you to give!" he said. "No; I love you too dearly to allow you to sacrifice yourself for a man who has passed through an ordeal like this!"

Once more the dark head sank into his hands.

"Fairfax, that's absurd! You wanted to marry me when a stain rested on my name—"

"That's very different," he broke in. "The discredit in no way reflected on you."

"And if it had, would it have prevented you from loving me?"

"Never!" The word was sharp and decisive.

"Well," exclaimed Betty, with a little laugh of triumph, "then that's settled!"

"What's settled?"

"That we're to be married!"

"Miss Crosby, don't you understand—"

"Don't call me Miss Crosby!" interrupted Betty imperiously. "And as to understanding, why"—her voice softened—"the big fact remains that we love each other, dear, and after that nothing matters. Dear heart, you do love me, don't you?"

Fairfax groaned and pressed his hands closer over his eyes.

"You're the most difficult man I ever proposed to," remarked Betty, with a tremulous little laugh. "Well, if you won't be nice, I'm going to ask you a question. Who was in the room with Molly Delaney that night when you were talking to Pat?"

Fairfax did not answer.

"Answer me, Fairfax!"

"I don't know. At least, I'm not sure."

"But you have a strong suspicion?"

"You can't implicate a man in a crime like this on a suspicion."

"But if that suspicion led to a correct solution?"

"It might not, and then it would bring unnecessary pain to innocent people. I know too much about that to be willing to inflict it on others," he concluded bitterly.

Betty sat for a moment wrapped in thought.

"If we could only get at the motive," she said, half to herself, "it might be a clue! Why should any one want to kill the girl? Do you know any reason?"

Fairfax moved restlessly.

"It's hard to tell," he answered evasively. "With people like that there are so many reasons. It might have been jealousy, fear of exposure, any one of half a dozen things."

"Well, I sha'n't rest night or day till I find out." Betty rose as the guard inserted his key in the lock. "I'll see you again soon."

"Did you learn anything?" asked Major Barry anxiously, when she joined him in the waiting-room.

Betty shook her head dejectedly.

"He absolutely refuses to tell who it was. Uncle Tod, I want to go down to Sheephead Bay and look through those rooms. I'm convinced that there must be something there that will give us a clue."

"But, my dear child, the detectives have searched them thoroughly."

"Yes, I know," Betty assented obstinately. "But it may be the only chance of saving him!"

She was very pale, but her chin was firm and resolute.

"I'll try to arrange it, but I'm afraid there isn't much hope. Where are you going now?"

"To the Crosbys'. I want to tell them of my engagement to Fairfax."

"What?"

The major stopped in the crowded street along which they were walking on their way to the Elevated train and looked aghast at the girl's calm face.

"Why, Uncle Tod," she exclaimed, "you don't mean to tell me you didn't know?"

"Know! Know what?"

"Why, that we love each other!"

"I knew that Cary loved you, and I suspected that you cared for him; but really, Betty, I hardly think that—at present, if I were you—I would—"

"You hardly think that now's the time for me to tell the world of my belief in Fairfax's innocence?" she said defiantly. "You'll have to forgive me for differing with you. I can't imagine any time more appropriate!"

The major looked at her with a gleam of admiration in his eyes. The color had mounted in her cheeks, and her eyes shone bright under the level brows.

"Of course, my dear," he answered in a conciliatory voice, "we all believe that Fairfax is innocent. Tell me, how does Cary feel about it?"

The dimple under Betty's eye came into play, and she broke into a little laugh.

"Oh, he says he won't marry me!"

The major looked relieved.

"He means, of course, not till this mess is straightened out."

They crossed the street and passed up the steps to the Elevated. When they were seated in the train Betty answered.

"I don't know what he means," she said. "I only know that I'm going to marry him as soon as possible."

"Well, you modern girls certainly know your own minds!" remarked the major. "Now, in my day it was customary—"

"To wait until we were asked?" interposed Betty merrily. "Well, things have changed, Uncle Tod; now it's the other way round. You men don't realize it, but it's

really the women who do the proposing. We let the men think the old custom is still in force. It makes them happier, and doesn't alter the fact!"

XV

BUT after she had said good-by to the major at her uncle's door and had entered the hall, the happy look faded from Elizabeth's face, and was replaced by one of firm resolve. She foresaw a struggle, and with characteristic energy determined to have it over as quickly as possible.

She went into the familiar drawing-room, and a slight feeling of surprise came over her at finding it exactly as it had been in the spring. The furniture stood in its accustomed places; the same photographs looked at her from their silver frames; the same copy of Omar Khayyam lay on the table by the same vase, which was filled as of old with pink carnations. Everything was just as she had left it; but, in spite of its familiarity, a different spirit brooded over the room, subtly conveying an impression of suspense, of dread.

"Absurd!" thought Betty, with a little shake of her shoulders. "I'm getting abnormally imaginative! It's I who have changed!"

She heard a step in the hall, and Mrs. Crosby parted the portières and walked into the room. In spite of the carefully shaded light, in spite of her elaborate mauve tea-gown and artistic make-up, Betty was shocked at her aunt's appearance.

"Aunt Maude," she exclaimed, deep concern in her voice, "you've been ill!"

Mrs. Crosby kissed the girl's cheek mechanically and dismissed the question with a wave of her jeweled hand.

"Come into the library," she said. "Your uncle is there."

They crossed the hall and entered the luxurious room. George Crosby rose from a deep chair by the fire and came slowly toward Betty. He kissed her affectionately and, turning back to the fire, dropped again into his seat.

He held out his hands to the blaze. They were thin and wrinkled, and twitched spasmodically, and in the light of the fire his face showed gray and haggard.

"You've been gone a long time, Elizabeth," began Mrs. Crosby in a curiously restrained voice. She had seated herself in

the corner of a sofa, on the other side of the fire, and Betty sank down beside her. "Do you think you have been very kind to us?"

Betty moved uneasily, and did not answer her aunt's question.

"Your uncle has hardly slept or eaten since you left," Mrs. Crosby went on plaintively; "and I—" She paused significantly.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" exclaimed Betty penitently. "I had no idea you would care!"

George Crosby turned his sunken eyes to her.

"Care?" he repeated dully.

"What made you think we wouldn't care?" asked Mrs. Crosby reproachfully. "It has been a dreadful six weeks! I only hope you will never know such suffering and anxiety as you have caused us!"

Betty's lip trembled.

"Oh, Aunt Maude," she whispered, "I wasn't happy, either; but I couldn't stay—I had to do something!"

"You might at least have told us where you were. We had no idea, and it isn't safe for young girls—"

"Yes, I know, aunt. Believe me, I'm very sorry."

A silence fell on them, broken only by the crackling of the flames and the subdued snap of a log as it broke in the middle and parted in a shower of sparks.

"Where are you stopping?" asked Mrs. Crosby at last.

"With the Hunnewells."

"Oh!" Mrs. Crosby glanced furtively at the girl's pure profile as she gazed past her into the fire. "I can imagine that Mrs. Hunnewell is very happy over Beatrix's escape."

"Escape?" repeated Betty in a bewildered voice and with an inquiring look at her aunt.

"Yes—from her engagement to Fairfax Cary."

"Oh!" said Betty slowly. "That never existed."

"How do you know?" asked Mrs. Crosby sharply.

"Both Trixie and Fairfax told me," answered Betty. "I am going to marry Fairfax Cary," she added quietly.

"What?" exclaimed her uncle and aunt simultaneously.

A happy smile illumined the girl's face.

"Yes," she went on, the thrushlike lilt ringing in her voice, "he came to see me in France, and asked me to marry him."

"Was this after the murder?"

Betty nodded.

"Yes; he sailed early the following morning, before he knew about it."

"Before any one else knew about it," interposed Mrs. Crosby biting. "But of course he has absolved you of your promise now?"

Betty laughed.

"Oh, I refused to marry him when he asked me; but later I found that I loved him and couldn't live without him, so this afternoon I told him so."

"Where did you see him?" asked George Crosby.

"At the Tombs," replied Betty calmly. "Uncle Tod took me."

"Tod Barry took you to the Tombs!" exclaimed Mrs. Crosby incredulously.

Betty nodded, and again her face was illumined by a bright smile.

"So now we're engaged," she concluded happily; "at least I am to him. I suppose he isn't engaged to me, for he refuses to marry me!"

"I'm glad he has some sense of honor left!"

George Crosby sank back into his chair, a relieved expression stealing over his face. Betty's eyes dilated, but her voice was quiet and controlled as she replied:

"That's the trouble—he has an exaggerated sense of honor. If it were not for that we should know, or at least have a very definite idea, who Molly Delaney's murderer is. Fairfax knows who was with her while he was talking to Pat, but he won't tell!"

A step had been coming along the hall, and when she finished speaking Betty looked up into Norman's livid face.

"Hello, Betty!" he exclaimed in a voice which he was evidently struggling to make sound natural. "So you've left your wounded soldiers?"

"Yes," answered Betty gravely, looking searchingly at the shrunken figure and restless, glittering eyes. "I thought just now I was needed more here."

"That nursing business has been run into the ground, anyway," observed Norman. He lit a cigarette and inhaled a deep breath of the smoke. "Just a fad!"

"You wouldn't think so if you had ever been in one of those hospitals and seen the need!" retorted Betty quickly. "It's terrible! All that unspeakable agony—sorrow—death—"

The boy started nervously.

"Death!" he exclaimed passionately.

"The whole world's gone mad on the subject! Can't we keep away from it?" He paced the room with quick, short steps. "It's got to a point where it's a morbid obsession with people. You hear it talked about wherever you go! You read it in every book, magazine, newspaper. It positively jumps at you from every street corner until your brain's fairly reeling! I should think at least in one's own home one could keep it out!"

He stopped at a mahogany chest that stood on a small table and, taking out a bottle, poured whisky into a glass. Raising the glass high above his head, his eyes burning feverishly, he exclaimed hoarsely: "To hell with death!" and gulped down the yellow liquid.

"Norman!" exclaimed his mother in a horrified voice. "What is the matter with you? I've never seen any one change as you have in the past few weeks!" She looked meaningfully at Elizabeth. "It's been like this ever since you left us at Newport!"

Norman dropped heavily into a chair by the table.

"Let's go away, mater, somewhere where it's warm and sunny. This beastly chill has got into my bones."

He shivered and drove his hands deep into his trouser-pockets.

"Come to the fire, dear," urged his mother. "Where would you like to go?"

"Don't care, only let's start soon—to-morrow, if you can get off."

"Well, hardly to-morrow, dear; there isn't such desperate haste as all that, surely. The next day, perhaps." She considered thoughtfully for a moment and added: "We might go to the Hot Springs."

"For Heaven's sake, don't go where there are a lot of prying, gossiping people!" exclaimed Norman hastily. "Can't we take a sea trip to Rio, or some place like that?"

"Mercy!" expostulated Mrs. Crosby. "That's an interminable way off!"

"That's just what I want—an interminable way off. Come with us, Betty!"

Betty shook her head.

"No; I've important work to do here," she announced.

"What?"

The boy eyed her narrowly.

"I'm going to find Molly Delaney's murderer."

For a moment no one spoke, and a tense stillness settled over the room. Then, as if unable to bear it, Norman jumped up.

"Well, I wish you luck!" he said huskily and disappeared through the door.

"He's been like that ever since you refused to marry him," said Mrs. Crosby, looking reproachfully at the pale face beside her. "As I told you at Newport, you could have done everything in the world for him, Betty; and now there are times when I'm really anxious about him. Don't you think you could come with us on this trip? It might mean saving the boy from—" She stopped.

Betty stared into the many-colored flames as they darted up the chimney, a feeling of apprehension clutching at her heart. This, then, and not the worry over her disappearance, was the reason for the atmosphere of anxiety and suspense that hung over the household. But, in spite of the fact that her heart was swelling with sympathy, she could not bring herself to leave New York just now.

"I'm sorry, Aunt Maude," she faltered. "If you'll only postpone the trip a little I might, but now—it's absolutely impossible. You must see that."

She looked pleadingly at her aunt.

"Do you think yourself cleverer than the police?" asked her uncle suddenly.

Betty spread out her hands desperately.

"I don't know, Uncle George. I only know that I've got to stay and do what I can. You see, I have a feeling that I may be able to discover why father—"

"Why father what?" asked George Crosby sharply.

"Why people were so unkind to him just before he died, and how he came to make such unfortunate investments. It's all so confused and unexplainable now, and I do so want to straighten it out! You must understand how I feel, don't you, Uncle George?"

She turned to him, eager for his sympathy and indorsement; but George Crosby did not reply. He sank deeper into his chair and covered his eyes with his shaking hand.

The tall clock in the corner struck six in silvery tones, and Betty rose quickly.

"I must go," she announced hurriedly.

"I had no idea it was so late!"

"Shall I order the motor for you?" asked her aunt.

"Oh, no, thank you, aunt. It's only a step to Trixie's."

She kissed them both and passed out into the hall. Norman came out of the drawing-room.

"I'll walk back with you," he said, taking his hat and gloves from the hall table.

He opened the door, and they stepped out into the sharp night air.

"Betty," he began, as soon as they reached the sidewalk, "I wouldn't get mixed up in this Fairfax Cary mess if I were you. It won't do any good; and you can't afford—no girl can—to have your name connected with a scandal like that."

Betty straightened herself stiffly.

"As I'm going to change my name to Cary before long, I'm naturally more anxious to get Fairfax out of this trouble than I am to guard the name of Crosby!" she retorted brusquely.

"Betty," exclaimed Norman, stopping abruptly and staring at her, "you're not—you're *not* going to marry that—"

"I am," interposed Betty calmly; "so don't make too many derogatory remarks about your future cousin!"

"Well, if that's the case, I've nothing further to say!"

They walked on to the Hunnewells' house in silence, and Norman rang the bell. The door was opened, and with a hurried good night he raised his hat and ran down the steps, leaving Betty to enter the luxurious warmth.

XVI

It was with steps heavy from fatigue that Major Barry entered the dark hall of his little apartment that evening, at about half past nine o'clock, and switched on the light. He took off his hat and coat in the tiny hall and, going into the sitting-room, lit the lamp. In his hand he held several letters. He settled himself in the comfortable chair by the table and, raising the lid of the humidor, took up his pipe and filled it leisurely.

"It certainly is good to have a little quiet at last," he said half aloud. "You must be

getting old, Tod; you can't stand the pace the way you used to. This last month has taken it out of you, my boy!"

He lit his pipe and, placing his glasses, with their broad, black ribbon, on his nose, took up the pile of letters and ran over the addresses.

"Wonder whose writing this is?" he soliloquized, gazing thoughtfully at one addressed in a tight, cramped hand. He broke open the flap and took out the folded sheet. It was a short note from Barney Tutney, written from the Rossmore Hotel, asking when he might see the major.

Major Barry's hand shot out toward the telephone on the table beside him. He gave the number of Tutney's hotel, and in five minutes had arranged an immediate interview with him at the apartment. He hung up the receiver, a look of grim resolve on his face.

When the bell rang, a little later, he jumped to the door, all trace of his fatigue gone. He grasped Tutney's hand in cordial welcome, helped him off with his coat, and drew him into the cozy room.

"Sit down, Tutney," he said. "Do you smoke?" He opened the humidor, and Tutney selected a cigar. "I'm smoking a pipe," he went on. "I find it great company when I'm alone."

The major held a match to the other man's cigar and studied his face as he drew in the smoke.

"I'm very glad you decided to come over so soon," he remarked, settling himself back in his chair.

Tutney took the cigar from his mouth and examined the lighted end critically.

"I thought it was about time," he answered slowly. "By the bye, I'm mighty sorry about Cary." He looked sharply at the major from under his shaggy eyebrows.

"A bad business!" admitted the major. He puffed a moment in silence, then he added quietly: "Of course, he had absolutely no connection with the murder."

"Of course not," agreed Tutney. "But, just the same, I guess there are people who are glad to have him where he is—out of mischief!"

"Perhaps those same people won't be overjoyed to hear of your return," remarked the major grimly.

"Probably not—probably not!" The keen eyes snapped. "Things weren't goin'

exactly right, and it don't do to let 'em get away from you. It's much better to take a hand in the beginnin', and oftentimes you can prevent a landslide."

"Yes," assented the major gravely. "But in this instance I'm afraid we're too late. I blame myself—"

"You couldn't do nothin', Major Barry," interposed the man, replacing the cigar in his mouth. He took a long puff and watched the smoke float off into the shadows. "How could you know how things were goin'? Now, if I'd been here, instead of in South Africa, things might have been different. When that stock was put up for sale I could have stepped right in."

"Are you sure it was Crosby's?"

"There ain't no doubt of it. The transaction was pretty well covered up, but I've managed to trace the brokers, and now I have my proofs. George Crosby's been speculatin' pretty heavily the last three months; and, besides, he got mixed up in a shyster rubber scheme, and from what I can learn, lost a pile of money in it."

Tutney stopped, and a great cloud of smoke rose around his head.

"Do you think there is any possibility of getting the estate—what is left of it—out of his hands?"

"Well, of course that's a question for a lawyer; but from the evidence I've been able to gather, I think Miss Crosby has a mighty strong case against her uncle. To my mind, there ain't no question but what she can force him to make good. There'd have to be a lawsuit, of course."

"That's the trouble; I don't know whether she would consent to it."

"She'll make a big mistake if she don't. If she waits for the three years to be up before she demands an accounting, there won't be anything left. It don't seem possible," Tutney ruminated, "that Randolph Crosby's pile should all be gone in four months and his daughter workin' for a livin'! Well, it's the first and last time, to my knowledge, that Mr. Crosby got fooled in his man. He thought an awful sight of his brother."

"Which makes George Crosby's behavior just that much more reprehensible," said Major Barry indignantly.

Tutney agreed and rose to go, promising to have his testimony ready at any time it was needed if a lawsuit were decided upon.

For a long while after Tutney left Major Barry sat puffing at his pipe and staring into the shadows. On his usually genial face was the expression it had worn when he and his command pursued Red Wolf's band after the massacre of Pine Notch. If the major had been the judge, in spite of his kindly heart, there would be as little clemency shown in this as in the other case.

However, he decided to postpone telling Betty of his discovery until the web which entangled Fairfax Cary was untangled.

"The poor child has quite enough to worry her," he thought regretfully as he rose and switched off the light; "and she's really fond of her uncle."

Contrary to the major's predictions, he did obtain permission to visit the Delaneys' rooms, and the next morning he and Betty motored down to the hotel at Sheepshead Bay, where a detective met them. They mounted the steep stairs and passed down the narrow hallway, with its unwholesome wall-paper and threadbare carpet. There was a portentous chill in the stale air, and Elizabeth shivered a little as the detective stopped before one of the closed doors and inserted the key.

The door opened, and they entered the jockey's room, evidently untouched since the day after his death. It looked neglected and desolate, with its unmade bed, half-open bureau drawers, and scattered papers. In one corner lay a crumpled red-silk shirt next to a stained pair of riding-breeches, and standing near was a riding-boot, its mate lying beside it. By the bed stood a small table, its baize cover gray with dust. In the mirror of the ash chiffonier was a snap-shot picture of Randolph Crosby.

A sob clutched at Betty's throat, but she resolutely forced it back. She glanced at the door, slightly ajar, which led into the adjoining room.

"I should like to go in there first," she said to the detective.

"Very well, Miss Crosby!"

He pushed back the door and let her pass. The men followed, and instinctively the major took off his hat.

The room was in great disorder. A trunk half filled with a motley array of garments stood in front of the window. On a chair gaped a suit-case, out of which trailed a worn shirt-waist. On the top of the bureau

was a mass of toilet articles, cosmetics, ribbons, veils, and gloves.

The mantel was littered with photographs of actors and actresses, jockeys and trainers. On one corner of it, on a stand, rested Molly's best hat. It was the one she had worn at the races on the afternoon before Randolph Crosby's death, and Betty saw once more the girl's audacious face sparkling under the crimson feather and purple rose.

The remembrance of that last happy afternoon brought the hot tears of regret into Betty's eyes, and to hide them she turned quickly to the mantel. She took up the hat and with gentle fingers brushed off the dust which lay thick on the drooping feather. A large photograph that stood behind the stand fell forward, disclosing a small, round object set in the wall.

"Why, what is that?" asked Betty.

Grimes, the detective, who had been idly turning over some old newspapers on a table near the window, came quickly to her side. Betty pointed to the wall.

"Well, if that don't beat all!" he said under his breath. "How do you suppose we came to pass that up?"

"What is it?"

The major left his place by the door, where he had lingered, and the expression of extreme distaste which had fixed itself on his face turned to one of liveliest interest.

Grimes's fingers ran lovingly over the little round disk.

"That's a dictograph. I wonder who put it there, and why he done it!"

The sharp, gray eyes narrowed, and he stepped toward the door that led into Pat's room, the major following.

Betty took an irresolute step after them and stopped. Her eyes fell upon the bed against which Molly had been found, and as if drawn by a power she could not resist, she walked slowly to it. She stood for a moment gazing down upon it, her imagination painting in vivid colors the last scene in the girl's life.

In the weeks of her hospital work, death had in a measure lost its horror for her, but this was different; this was death in its most revolting form, without the nobility of self-sacrifice. It was sordid, hideous, repulsive! A shudder passed over her, and she turned quickly, as if to rid herself of the

room and its associations, when her eye was caught by the glint of something bright in the space between the mattress and the wooden side of the bed.

She stooped down and saw, lying on the slats, a small glittering object. From the other room came the indistinct murmur of the men's voices, broken once by an exclamation from the detective. Betty hastily put her hand into the narrow space; when she drew it out it held a gold cigarette-case. The case was half open, and the cigarettes under the gold bar were stained and dark. Betty looked at it, her eyes widening in horror.

Steps sounded behind her.

"That was a great find you made, Miss Crosby," said a voice at her shoulder. "Now, if we can discover why it was put there, and what went through it the night of the murder, I guess we'll have our man, all right!"

Elizabeth started violently and turned quickly, involuntarily keeping the hand that held the cigarette-case behind her. The detective eyed her curiously.

"Have you found anything else?" he asked.

"Oh, no," answered Betty faintly.

Major Barry had joined them, and was standing beside her. At the man's words he, too, fastened his eyes on the girl's strained face.

"What have you in your hand?" demanded Grimes.

The blood receded from Betty's face, and she turned pleadingly to the major.

"Oh, nothing—nothing! Tell him it isn't anything!" she begged piteously.

"Miss Crosby"—the detective spoke impressively—"in the name of the law, I ask you to tell me what you have found."

He stepped toward her, and Betty, slowly drawing her hand from behind her back, held out the cigarette-case. Grimes seized it and examined it closely.

"Blood!" he exclaimed under his breath. "Where did you find it?"

"There," replied Betty in a hardly audible whisper, pointing to the bed.

"Slipped out of his pocket when he stooped over the girl!" mused Grimes. He turned the case over, searching for a mark on it. A monogram stood out in bold relief on the cover. "C," he ruminated. "Cary—"

"No! Not Cary!" Betty's words rang sharply through the room.

"Who, then?" asked Grimes quickly, his keen eyes fixed on her face.

Elizabeth did not answer, and the detective went back to his study of the letters.

"N, R, it looks to me; but I can't make it out for sure."

He held out the case to Major Barry for his corroboration; but the major shook his head.

"I haven't my glasses," he explained; "but I can see enough to know that the initials don't stand for Fairfax, which is Mr. Cary's name. I think this discovery will let him out, don't you?"

Grimes shook his head doubtfully, evidently loath to let a victim escape out of his net until he had another to take the vacant place.

"Maybe," he assented; "but it ain't for me to say. I'll take this to headquarters right off. You're sure you don't know who it belongs to?"

He looked distrustfully at Betty, who shook her head.

"Will this be used as evidence?" she asked.

The detective nodded.

"It's mighty important evidence. This and the dictograph are the best clues we've had yet, and we have you to thank for both of them, Miss Crosby. I dare say they'll clear everything up."

The major put his hand through Betty's arm.

"Come," he said gently. "Don't you think we might go now?"

XVII

WITH a hurried good-by to the detective, they passed into the hall. Neither spoke as they walked through the deserted corridor, their footsteps echoing desolately against the closed doors. It was only when they were alone in the taxi that Betty's self-control gave way. She clutched the major's arm, her horror-stricken eyes devouring his face.

"Oh, Uncle Tod," she gasped, "did you recognize the cigarette-case?"

The major took her hand and began stroking it tenderly.

"There, there, my child," he said soothingly. "You mustn't take it so to heart! You'll make yourself ill!"

"Oh, Uncle Tod, don't stop to think about me! Do you know to whom it belongs?"

"Yes, I knew the initials."

Betty's hand tightened on his.

"What shall we do? Oh, why did it have to be I who found it?"

"Nonsense, child; some one was bound to find it sooner or later. As it happens, it is fortunate that it was you, for now we may be able to get the boy away before suspicion fastens on him. Will you tell the Crosbys, or shall I?"

"I will, of course," replied Betty hurriedly. "Oh, how ghastly, how awful for them! Do you really think he did it?"

She looked almost pleadingly into the candid face beside her. The major pursed up his lips and stroked his gray mustache thoughtfully.

"It's hard to say positively, Betty, but—the boy's record is against him."

Betty nodded, and once again a tremor passed over her.

"Poor Uncle George!"

Her eyes filled with tears. Major Barry continued to stroke her hand, and began to tell her of the best course to be pursued to get Norman away. He drew a glowing picture of the openings for young men in far-off lands, where the boy would be cut off from his old associates and temptations. Gradually he led Betty's thoughts away from the horror of the situation, and she regained her self-possession.

But it was a very white, tremulous Betty who ascended the steps of her uncle's house, before which stood Norman's motor. As the major saw her disappear into the hall, he decided that he would follow her as soon as he had telephoned his discovery to Sturgis, who would convey the news to Cary.

Elizabeth went at once to the library, where she found Norman seated in a big chair with newspapers scattered around him. At the sight of her white face he jumped to his feet and came quickly to her.

"Betty!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "What is it?"

Steps sounded in the hall, and Norman glanced fearfully toward the door. A look of relief came into his face as his father and mother appeared.

"Has anything been found?" he faltered in a low voice, his eyes fixed on Betty's face.

"You must go—quick, Norman, quick! Don't stop to talk!" She was pushing him toward the door. "Your cigarette-case—it was found in Molly Delaney's room. Oh, Norman, hurry! Hurry!"

He started toward the door, but Mrs. Crosby laid a restraining hand on his arm. "Norman!" she cried. "What is it?"

He shook her off violently.

"Don't keep me! They've found—they'll be here for—for—"

He vanished up the stairs.

"Who are they, and what are they coming for?" asked George Crosby irascibly, coming toward Betty.

Elizabeth pressed her hands tightly together, and her lips quivered.

"Oh, Uncle George!" she moaned, going to him and laying her hand gently on his arm. "It's about Molly Delaney—"

Her voice trailed away into silence.

"Molly Delaney! Do they connect my son with that?"

Betty did not answer, but the expression on her face seemed to give him all the information he needed. He turned from her and, sinking into a big armchair, buried his head in his hands. Betty ran to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

"Oh, uncle dear!" she whispered.

A hurried step sounded in the hall, and Mrs. Crosby flew to the door.

"Good-by, my boy!" they heard her say.

George Crosby rose and with uncertain feet followed her. Betty walked beside him, watching him anxiously. When they reached the hall he put his hand into his breast pocket and, drawing out his wallet, took out the money it contained.

"You'll need this," he said huskily, and thrust it into Norman's hand.

There was a hurried good-by, the front door opened and slammed, and the feverish throb of the motor sounded in their ears. Swaying slightly, George Crosby turned again toward the library. Betty put her arm through his and guided him back to the chair by the fire. He fell into it, and his gray head dropped against the back. Mrs. Crosby followed them and stopped beside them.

"What does it all mean?" she asked harshly, turning to Betty.

As gently as she could, Betty told them of the search of Molly's room and the resulting discovery.

"Who found the cigarette-case?"

Mrs. Crosby's tone was sharp and quick. Betty hesitated, and it seemed as if every drop of blood in her body had flowed back to her heart, leaving her numb and cold. George Crosby raised his head and fixed haggard eyes upon her. The silence closed in upon them like the crushing walls of an inquisitorial room.

"Was it you?"

Mrs. Crosby stepped menacingly toward Betty, who shrank from the look of implacable rage and hatred in her aunt's face.

"It was you!" she breathed fiercely. "You—you—traitor! Living in our house, taking advantage of information you got while we were saving you from starvation! And now—now"—her voice rose almost to a shriek—"you've hounded my boy out of his home! God only knows where he can go! Why did you do it? You've brought nothing but misery to us!"

Under the lash of her aunt's words, Betty's eyes had widened until they looked like pools of dark water reflecting the storm-clouds above. She wrung her hands piteously.

"I never thought—" she faltered.

"Never thought! Never thought!" repeated her aunt angrily. "No, you never think of any one but yourself and that precious lover of yours!"

The scorn in her voice was biting, and it stung Betty beyond control.

"And my father!" she supplemented passionately.

"Your father?" sneered Mrs. Crosby.

"Yes!" repeated Betty in a strained voice which she hardly recognized as her own. "If it had not been for the stigma on my father's name, I should never have felt justified in entering on this search. As it was—"

"And what did you find?"

Mrs. Crosby's thin lips were drawn back in a derisive smile. Betty hesitated, and her eyes wandered to the gray head resting on the back of the chair. Her chin trembled a little.

"What did you find?" demanded Mrs. Crosby once more. "In spite of the ruin you've brought on us, you've found nothing that clears your father's name, or ever will!"

Major Barry's immaculate figure appeared in the doorway.

"I think you're wrong there," he remarked quietly, after a searching look at Elizabeth's quivering face. "We've been looking into Randolph's affairs a bit lately—some of his business associates and I—and we've discovered quite a number of things."

Mrs. Crosby's face blanched, the two brilliant spots of color standing out grotesquely on her cheeks. George Crosby's eyes fixed themselves feverishly on the major's face.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this, Mrs. Crosby—when Randolph died he left some very valuable stock, which has since been sold—"

George Crosby's hand tightened on the arm of his chair until even the nails showed white. His face was livid.

"How do you know?"

"I know through one of the other directors of the concern, in which Randolph held a large interest. This man has traced the sale of the stock." He turned suddenly to George Crosby. "Do you deny it?"

George Crosby sank even deeper into the big chair, and his hand went up to his sagging mouth. Unable to meet the accusing eyes fixed on him, his head fell forward until his chin rested on his chest. Betty took a hurried step forward.

"Uncle Tod, what is it? I don't quite understand—"

"My dear, it's simply this—your father died, as we all believed, a very rich man. It is since his death that his money has been dissipated."

"Oh!" The word was hardly more than a sigh. "Who—"

"That's just it; who could have sacrificed your interests and betrayed your father's confidence? Who had the power?"

Again the major's condemning eyes sought George Crosby's stricken figure.

"Uncle George, did you do this thing?" Betty drew nearer and nearer to him, her eyes wide, her mouth quivering. "You, whom my father loved and trusted? Oh, tell me it isn't true!"

She sank down on her knees beside him and clutched his arm. There was a long silence.

"It is true!" came at length, in hollow tones, from the bowed head.

Betty drew back slowly, as if still loath to believe what she heard.

"My father's brother!" The words seemed drawn from her. "And he loved you!"

The man before her shuddered.

"Betty!" he groaned. "I didn't mean—"

As if in hope that he was about to disclaim his culpability, Betty stooped eagerly toward him; but he stopped abruptly, and once more the gray head fell forward. A heavy silence wrapped itself about them, which at last Mrs. Crosby's harsh voice broke.

"Well, it's all out now!" she said violently. "I suppose you'll send your uncle to join Norman in prison!"

Betty looked at her aunt as if her words were husks void of the grain of meaning. Bending over her uncle's huddled form, she stroked his gray head tenderly; then she stooped over and kissed him.

"Uncle George, don't worry about it!" she whispered so softly that the words hardly reached the others. "I'm sure it was all a mistake. I don't believe it was for yourself you took the money. At all events, it will never make any difference between you and me."

A great sob shook the bent shoulders. George Crosby caught her hand and held it to his lips. Betty kissed him again, and then, holding out her hand to Major Barry, drew him out of the house.

XVIII

MAJOR BARRY'S face was glowing with satisfaction as he sat in Cary's cell the next morning and rehearsed for his benefit the search in the Delaneys' rooms.

"I tell you, that little girl's a wonder, Fairfax!" he exclaimed. "She was in a nasty fix there, with the evidence of her cousin's guilt, which she had found herself, in her hand. She naturally didn't want to implicate him, and yet she had to exonerate you. I was sorry for the child."

The taut lines of Cary's face had relaxed in a tender smile.

"But you say she wouldn't let it go when the detective suggested that the 'C' on the case stood for my name?"

The major laughed boyishly.

"No, sir! She spoke up loud and clear then, all right! Now, the next thing is to discover what was heard through that dictograph."

"That seems like an almost hopeless

quest, now that Pat's gone," answered Fairfax gloomily.

"Can't tell, my boy; luck's begun running for us now, and I wouldn't be surprised at anything. It was too bad Sturgis couldn't arrange about bail yesterday. I had hoped, when I telephoned, that you would be out last night."

"Apparently it couldn't be done. There's always so much red tape in a case like this."

"I wanted to come down and tell you all about the discovery myself, but I knew Sturgis would give you the facts, and I really felt that I must go to the Crosbys'. It was fortunate that I did, for that fiend, Maude Crosby, was at poor little Betty neck and crop, and, I think, would have rent her asunder if I hadn't turned up when I did. She's a devil, that woman!" The major's shoulders stiffened and his jaw snapped. "I should like to see her brought to her knees!"

Again the tender smile stole over Cary's face.

"And Betty isn't going to bring action against her uncle?"

"Won't consider it for a minute," returned the major. "Nothing I could say or do would convince her that she is making a mistake. She won't hear of a lawsuit."

"Well, after all, it's Betty's money, and she's the one to decide. It isn't as if she will really need it now."

"No; there's comfort in that thought. You're not going to let her go back to France, are you, Fairfax?" asked the major, eying the other man's face anxiously.

"She's not going out of this country for some time, if I have anything to say about it, and she seems to think I have, unless"—a light spread over Cary's face—"I can persuade her to take that trip to Bermuda that you suggested a while ago!"

"That would be great! The sooner the better." Major Barry glanced restlessly at his watch. "It seems to me that Sturgis ought to be along pretty soon now."

A guard appeared at the door and unlocked it; but the man who was with him was not the alert, keen-eyed lawyer, but a slender youth with slack shoulders and narrow, furtive eyes. The major looked inquiringly at Fairfax, who shook his head in answer to the unspoken question. The boy slouched into the cell and touched the brim of his hat awkwardly.

"Mr. Cary," he began in a high, shrill voice, "you don't remember me, but I'm Jim—Jim Murphy. I used ter work fer Mr. Crosby."

A sudden flash illumined Cary's memory, and he held out his hand cordially.

"Why, Jim!" he exclaimed. "Of course I remember you! You used to take care of Steadfast."

The boy grasped his hand and wrung it.

"I sure did, Mr. Cary!"

"Sit down, Jim, sit down; of course I remember you, and so does Major Barry, I'm sure." The major nodded pleasantly to the boy, and Fairfax went on: "Weren't you with Pat the night he died? I seem to recall seeing you at the hotel."

He looked searchingly into Jim's face.

"Yes, sir; that's what I come ter see ye about. I wuz with Pat till late that night."

Jim was sitting on the edge of his chair, nervously twisting his hat around in his big-knuckled hands.

"Then you came back after I went away?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was Molly alive when you left?" The major asked the question eagerly, leaning far out of his seat.

"Yes, sir; she came in two or three times ter see how Pat wuz gettin' along."

Mr. Sturgis had arrived in time to hear the boy's words, and the three men looked at one another in undisguised pleasure.

"Well," exclaimed the major triumphantly to Fairfax, "that lets you out! I wish we had known this before," he added, turning to Murphy.

"I'm sorry, sir, but I didn't know nothin' about what happened after I lef' till about a week ago. The night Pat got smashed up I went to Texas with Mr. Vinton's horses. We wuz on a ranch, and didn't often get the newspapers. I wuz kind o' surprised that Molly didn't let me know how Pat wuz, but she an' I had had a row, and I s'posed she wuz too mad to write. It wuz only when I had a letter from a friend of mine that I knew"—his voice faltered—"that they wuz both dead."

The muscles of his face twitched, and he put his big hand over his mouth.

"This is most important evidence!" announced the lawyer.

"I knowed it would be, sir. I felt awful bad when I heard Mr. Cary wuz up fer

murder, and I sez ter meself, 'You fer the Great White Way, Jim!' an' I beats it right on. I should think any guy would know *he ain't* done it—that is, if they knew him at all."

"Who did do it, Jim?" The major's voice was like cold steel.

"Well, when I went away, Mr. Crosby—Mr. Norman Crosby—was in the next room with Molly. He'd been there all evenin', an' they'd been havin' it out hot an' heavy. We could hear 'em, Pat an' I, even with the door shut, but we couldn't make out what they wuz sayin'. Fer a long time Pat hadn't liked the way things wuz goin', so he rigged up one o' them dictograph things in Molly's room and strung the wires into his."

"What was it he suspected?"

The boy moistened his lips.

"He wanted ter find out about the Withers Stake—ye know, when Steadfast got licked?" He glanced interrogatively at Major Barry, who nodded. "Well," he went on, "I'd been givin' Pat some dope about what happened just before that race, when he went off ter dress, an' then Molly had let drop enough ter put him wise that somethin' wuz wrong. I wuz in the stable all the time Pat wuz gone. Mr. Norman an' Molly didn't know it, but I wuz in the stall just the other side of Steadfast's."

He stopped, and his face became ghastly.

"Why did you think—"

Jim swallowed hard.

"Molly an' me had been pals since we wuz kids, an' I wuz kind o' sore when she dropped me," he half whispered. "I knowed Mr. Norman wuz rushin' her, an' I wanted ter find out how far things had gone, so I hid an' listened."

Jim's big hand clenched, and a red light gleamed in the deep-set eyes.

"He wuz tellin' her that he loved her, an' he kissed her. Then he went inter Steadfast's stall, an' I heard Molly askin' him what he wuz doin'. He said he wuz fixin' things so that he an' Molly could go off on a trip an' have a bang-up time. It wuz after I told Pat that that he got the dictograph; an' the night Pat died we heard the whole thing. Molly told him that she'd seen him dope Steadfast, an' there wasn't no use in his denyin' it, an' she'd fix him, all right, if he didn't do as he'd promised an' marry her. Pat made me write it all down. He wuz pretty far in, an' he wuz

afraid he'd forget somethin'. He said Mr. Cary had promised ter come back in the mornin', an' he wanted ter have it fer him. So I wrote it down an' hid the paper under the cover o' the table by the bed, where Pat could reach it, an' where Molly wouldn't be apt ter find it. Then I had ter go. As it was, I nearly missed my train."

"Your testimony will be invaluable in clearing Mr. Cary," remarked Sturgis. "We shall want you to repeat this in court."

"Yes, sir; that's what I come on fer. I wasn't goin' ter let Mr. Cary be put out o' bizness fer what he ain't done. Mr. Cary's on the level, sir! He's all right, an' I couldn't stand by an' see him takin' what ought ter be comin' ter that—"

Jim stopped, and his nostrils quivered.

XIX

It was about four o'clock that afternoon that Fairfax Cary ran up the front steps of the Hunnewells' house. When he entered the hall the air was vibrant with the rich chords of the "Nocturne in F." He stood for a moment drinking in its tender harmonies. Wave after wave of the music passed over him, pulsing through his veins into his heart, until at last it seemed as if his soul had been washed white from the prison taint which, even after he left the Tombs, had hovered over him with a sickening sense of impurity.

Stronger and more penetrating rose the music, with its swelling chords and haunting melody. Fairfax pushed aside the portières and stepped into the room. The music stopped abruptly, and Betty, with a little cry, rose from the piano. Her face turned very white.

"I didn't know—" she faltered.

He strode across the room and caught her in his arms.

"My dear, my dear!" she sobbed, clinging to him.

He held her to him, and kissed her hungrily with the pent-up passion of long months of waiting. When he half released her to gaze into her eyes, he found them full of tears.

"Darling," he expostulated, "you're crying!"

The tears overflowed, and Betty buried her face in his shoulder.

"Of course I am!" she cried.

"Will you tell me why?"

"I haven't had time to cry in weeks," answered Betty tremulously. "You don't suppose I could stop to cry when there was anything to do, do you?"

Cary's arms tightened around her, and he tenderly kissed the drops away.

"My darling!" he whispered. "Tell me that you love me!"

But she pushed him away with a tremulous little laugh.

"I've been telling you so for weeks. If you don't believe it now, you never will!"

She took his hand and led him to the sofa.

"I sha'n't feel sure of you until we're married," answered Fairfax. "We can be very soon, can't we, dear?"

"I told you in France that I wouldn't marry any one till father's name had been cleared."

"Darling, it has been! Jim Murphy, your father's stable-boy, came to see me this morning. He saw Norman dope Steadfast before the Withers race. Jim will swear to it in court."

"Norman!" exclaimed Betty. "How dreadful!"

"Molly was with him, and it was after her threat to expose the whole thing that he killed her."

"How ghastly, Fairfax! How perfectly dreadful! Poor Uncle George!"

"So now, darling, you won't keep me waiting any longer, will you?"

Betty snuggled closer to him and laid her head on his shoulder.

"I'm ready now, as far I can be," she whispered softly. "I can't get a big trousseau, Fairfax. You know why, don't you, dear? I haven't a cent in the world. Do you realize that you're getting a penniless bride?"

She raised troubled eyes and anxiously studied his face.

Fairfax laughed boyishly.

"Really?" he teased. "Then I can't marry you, my pretty maid!"

"I hate you!" and Betty pressed her lips to his.

THE END

EDITOR'S NOTE—It should have been stated in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE for April last that three of the engravings printed in that issue—those on pages 385, 471, and 473—were from photographs by Valentine & Sons, Dundee.